

THE BEAUTIES

... OF THE ...

CATHOLIC CHURCH



FR. PUSTET CO., INC.

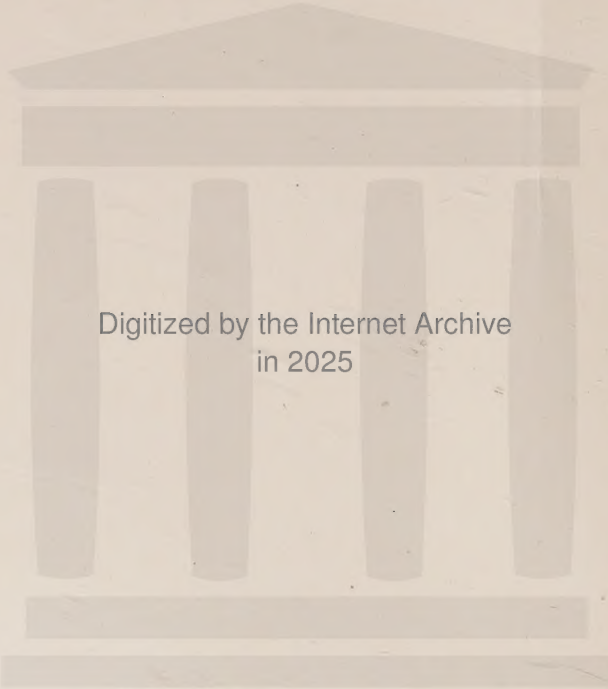
PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK

14 Barclay St.

CINCINNATI

436 Main St.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

THE BEAUTIES
OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH;

OR,

HER FESTIVALS, AND HER RITES AND CEREMONIES,
POPULARLY EXPLAINED.

Revised and Adapted to New Code of Canon Law

BY

VERY REV. F. J. SHADLER.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY RT. REV. P. N. LYNCH, D.D.,
BISHOP OF CHARLESTON, S. C.

TWENTY-EIGHTH EDITION

Property of
COSA

Please return to

Graduate Theological
Union Library

Frederick Hustet Co. (Inc.)
NEW YORK AND CINCINNATI

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

Nihil Obstat:

REV. ARTHUR J. SCANLAN, S.T.D.

Imprimatur:

✝ PATRICK J. HAYES, D.D.

New York, October 7, 1919.

Copyright, 1881,

BY

F. J. SHADLER

Property of

1881

Please return to

Ecumenical Theological

Library

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN EDITION,	v
TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE,	viii

INTRODUCTION.

OF THE CEREMONIES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN GENERAL,	1
--	---

PART I.

Of the Feasts and Ceremonies of the Ecclesiastical Year.

CHAPTER I.

From the First Sunday of Advent to Septuagesima Sunday, .	13
---	----

CHAPTER II.

From Septuagesima Sunday to Passion Sunday, . . .	21
---	----

CHAPTER III.

From Passion Sunday to Maundy or Holy Thursday, . .	30
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

Good Friday and Holy Saturday,	41
--	----

Contents.

CHAPTER V.

From Easter to the Feast of the Ascension of our Lord, . . .	68
--	----

CHAPTER VI.

From the Feast of the Ascension of our Lord to the Feast of Corpus Christi,	88
--	----

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Feast of Corpus Christi,	109
---	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the Minor Feasts of our Lord,	127
--	-----

CHAPTER IX.

Of the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary,	146
---	-----

CHAPTER X.

Of the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary (continued), . . .	162
---	-----

CHAPTER XI.

Of the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary (continued), . . .	185
---	-----

CHAPTER XII.

Of the Feasts of the Saints,	200
--	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

Of the Feast of the Dedication of a Church,	219
---	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

Of the Feast of the Dedication of a Church (continued), . . .	238
---	-----

CHAPTER XV.

Of the Feast of All Saints and the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed,	259
---	-----

PART II.

Of the Ceremonies employed in the Administration of the Sacraments.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, . . . 296

CHAPTER II.

Of Holy Communion and the Sacrifice of the Mass, . . . 310

CHAPTER III.

Of the Mass (continued)—The Sacerdotal Vestments and the Sacred Vessels, 333

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Mass (continued)—The Prayers and Ceremonies of the Mass, 345

CHAPTER V.

Of the Mass (continued)—The Prayers and Ceremonies of Mass from the Preface to the End of Mass, 363

CHAPTER VI.

Of the Mass (continued)—Use of the Latin Language at Mass, Incense at Solemn Mass, etc., 378

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Sacrament of Penance, 387

CHAPTER VIII.

Of Indulgences and the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, . . . 400

CHAPTER IX.

Of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, 415

CHAPTER X.

Of the Consecration of Bishops and of the Councils of the Church,	433
---	-----

CHAPTER XI.

Of the Pope,	443
------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XII.

Of the several Dignitaries of the Church—Of Religious Orders and Confraternities,	457
---	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

Of the Sacrament of Matrimony,	475
--	-----

INTRODUCTION.

THE remarkable increase of our Catholic literature within the last quarter of a century is one of the striking evidences of the growth of the Church in the United States. Fifty years ago the number of the faithful was indeed rapidly increasing, chiefly by the immigration of Catholics from Europe: but that very increase required that all our energies should be devoted to the erection of churches and the establishment of missions, of schools, and religious institutions, in order to meet at once, so far as possible, the primary and most pressing needs of the Church. For this purpose the means of Catholics, very few of whom rose above the condition of poverty, were taxed to the utmost, and must still be largely drawn on. Such means have been and are still supplied in a measure that surprises even ourselves.

Meanwhile, as years rolled on, industry and frugality have not failed to produce their natural effects. Many families, poor on their arrival, have risen to a comparative competence, and even to wealth. Their children, growing up, were not, and could not be, familiar with the Catholic literature of the lands of their parents, and looked for a literature of their own country. The demand for a largely-increased literature of our own made itself felt. It was soon answered. The number of Catholic publishers, which until then might be counted almost on the fingers, rapidly swelled, and Catholic works of every class began to appear. Numerous editions of the Holy Scriptures, books of devotion of every class, controversial works, histories, school-books, works of fiction and of general literature, quarterlies, monthlies, and sound Catholic newspapers, have been brought within the reach of every one; and the list is still increasing. But if much has already been accomplished in this department, how much more remains to be effected, both as to the increased number and variety of such works and the increase of their circulation! It is a most important duty, for parents especially, to see to it that our Catholic children be fully supplied with good Ca-

tholic reading suited to their age. Those advanced in life, who have labored and toiled for years, and who now crave and enjoy rest, may feel satisfied with little more than their manuals of devotion. Those in middle life may be so engrossed with the cares and anxieties of business as to care little, or even to be in some measure unfitted, for reading. But the young will read, must read. If they have not at hand suitable and attractive Catholic books, they will read something else, perhaps something very different; they will plunge into the flashy and sensational literature of the day, which deluges the country, and so often makes shipwreck of the virtue and saps the faith of the young. Neither parental authority nor pastoral influence can prevent this evil save by supplying sound and proper Catholic reading for the young. How often may we not trace in great measure to the neglect of this precaution and of this important duty the sorrow with which aged parents sink into the grave, almost heart-broken by their wayward children. Give to the young, even in the early years of their baptismal innocence, books suitable to their age, but books calculated to excite and stimulate their love and esteem for virtue and to open their minds and hearts to some knowledge and esteem of our holy faith. Fortunately we have a multitude of such works, and children love them. No Catholic home can be said to be complete without a shelf of such books for the little ones. As the children grow older, and their intellect becomes stronger, stronger works are needed. They will take up with pleasure and with profit books which fill their minds with a more distinct and precise knowledge of Catholic doctrines and usages, which present to them the history of the Church and her true place and influence in the world, and which prepare them to uphold and to defend the faith they have learned to know more clearly and to reverence and cherish more dearly.

Happy is the Catholic who, by early education and by parental example, has been trained to use and to relish such reading. A firm, well-instructed faith will not fail to make its influence felt in all the actions of life. Even in a worldly point of view he is fortunate; for in such reading the powers of the intellect are invigorated, while at the same time the heart is made firmer in its sense of right and duty. His brain is not addled, his judgment and his conscience are not warped, nor his passions aroused by the imbecilities, the follies, and the evil stimulations so rife in current sensational so-called literature. The work here presented to the public falls into this class of stronger Catholic books for popular reading, and will not be found the least valuable among them.

The learned and pious author, taking up the annual cycle of the feasts of the Church, and then the sacraments and the approved rites of the Church, and other important themes, sets forth their history and purposes, explains their ceremonies, points out their proper devotional meaning and intent, and wherever doctrines are involved, as is frequently the case, he ably defends these against the attacks usually made, whether from misconception, prejudice, or ignorance. He has specially sought to do this in a manner which, so far from fatiguing the reader, would, on the contrary, fix his attention and awaken his interest. He has chosen the form of dialogue, so true to human nature, and, from the days of Socrates, accepted as the best and most efficient form of presenting even abstruse subjects without tiring the mind. How well the author has succeeded the reader will judge. He never fails to present a popular objection in its clearest form, and the reply will be found equally clear and to the point and thoroughly conclusive.

The welcome with which this work was received in Germany on its first appearance, and the various editions it has passed through in that country, and its wide circulation, are evidences that it met a need which thoughtful and intelligent Catholics felt, and are a guarantee that, presented now in an English dress, it will be equally acceptable and equally beneficial. It will be found on some points to fill a void in our English Catholic literature, and on others to present information which otherwise could be obtained only with difficulty, and under favorable circumstances.

The translator has, to some extent, taken the same liberty with the work which was taken in the several German editions. He has endeavored to accommodate it to the position of the Catholic Church in this country, omitting some few passages which referred to usages peculiar to Germany and unknown to us, and inserting other passages in which a fuller exposition is desirable here than was needed in Germany when the author wrote. In this the reverend translator has held in view the aim of the author, who wished to give to his work the stamp of actuality.

"THE BEAUTIES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH" will, I trust, find, as it deserves, a wide circulation among Catholics, and also among fair-minded non-Catholics, who wish to learn what are really the doctrines and what the true spirit of the Church, as set forth in approved Catholic works.

✠ P. N. LYNCH, D.D.,

Bishop of Charleston.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE work here offered to the Catholic public was originally written by the Rev. Gregory Rippel, pastor of Fessenheim, in the diocese of Mayence, before the beginning of the present century. In 1841 it was remodelled and enlarged by the Rev. Henry Himichen, then vice-rector of the Episcopal Seminary of Mayence. With the changes and additions it received at his hands it became almost a new work: it is for this reason that I have retained the name of the latter upon the title-page. To show how highly the book has been appreciated, it is sufficient to state that even at this late day it has not gone out of print in Germany. In the opinion of several American prelates and ecclesiastics of experience, at whose suggestion I have undertaken to translate and adapt it to the circumstances of our country, it is calculated to fill a void in English Catholic literature. I have not confined myself to merely translating the original, but, while striving to preserve its simple and unpretending style, I have omitted the explanation of a number of local customs and usages, and have inserted instead other matters of more general interest, especially in our day.

The kind introduction to the present work by the learned and distinguished Bishop of Charleston, setting forth its scope and object, render any further observations on my part unnecessary. May the book, in its present form, produce as much good among us as it has produced since its first appearance in Germany; may it open to the Catholic a clear understanding of the deep significance of the rites and ceremonies of his Church, and make them instructive and profitable to him; and may it afford an occasion to the non-Catholic innocently laboring under misapprehensions to correct his misconceptions, and lead him to the conviction that what, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, has been built up in the Catholic Church during more than eighteen hundred years, is not to be considered a mere heap of unconnected ruins.

F. J. S.

CHARLESTON, S. C., Feast of the Ascension, 1881.

Introduction.

The Ceremonies of the Catholic Church in General.

•

THE parishioners of Christenthal were a good, sterling people. Removed from the excitement and turmoil of the city and the bustle of the highway by the surrounding mountains, the inhabitants of this charming valley had faithfully preserved the simple habits of their ancestors, and clung with heart and soul to the faith and pious practices of their fathers. Among other usages they had preserved the custom of assembling every evening, as soon as the "Angelus bell" had rung, under the old linden-tree in the middle of the village, provided the weather and the season would permit. Though their conversations were not confined to any special topic, yet, to their praise be it said, the talk was in most instances instructive and edifying, and the discourse of many among them so attractive and entertaining that even the younger members of the parish would frequently forego the pleasure of some lively game in order to listen to the discussion or recitals of their elders.

Of late it had occurred several times that a new-comer had joined the company. It was the pastor who had recently taken charge of the parish. The majority of those present thought that it was by mere accident and without design that he was found among their number, and, indeed, so it seemed.

But there were others who were of the opinion that chance had nothing to do with his presence in their midst, for they had already observed how the pastor would profit by every opportunity to enter into conversation with those whom he met, and how full of tact and sympathy were his pious, consoling, or encouraging remarks. It might be, so they thought, that in this instance also he sought an occasion for a similar purpose, or perhaps he was only anxious to convince himself that nothing hurtful lurked behind the conversations of his flock. Be this as it may, the new pastor was always gladly welcomed at their meetings. Well-informed upon many subjects, and rich in experience, he had so much of interest to communicate that he never left them without having entertained and at the same time benefited all. While he instructed them in many things useful and advantageous in their daily avocations, he knew so skilfully how to direct their thoughts towards God, and to mingle spiritual things with worldly conversations, that on one occasion several declared that the pastor's words at these meetings under the old linden-tree seemed to them like listening to a "lovely song of one who hath a pleasing voice."

This state of things had lasted for some time, and the visits of the worthy pastor had become more frequent and more regular. One evening the assembly, ordinarily so peaceful, was engaged in a somewhat animated dispute with one of their number. Scarcely had they seen the pastor at a distance when several hastened to meet him, in order to submit to him the matter in dispute, and to beg of him an explanation and a decision. They had been speaking of the rites and ceremonies of divine worship in the Catholic Church. On this evening, as it happened, there was present at the meeting a young man named Thomas, who a short time before had returned from his travels abroad and had gathered for himself much very useful knowledge; but he had also heard and seen much that he did not understand,

and this was particularly the case with things pertaining to religion. He was, moreover, somewhat proud of his extensive travels, and delighted in contradicting what others said, because he imagined this could not fail to invest him with great authority in the eyes of the rest. He had expressed the opinion that the ceremonies of divine worship were superstitious and antiquated ; that they were practices derived from the Jews, and were no longer suited to the enlightenment of the present age ; and that we read in the Scriptures, moreover, that we must worship God in spirit and in truth.

It was with difficulty that the pastor could subdue the indignation which the expression of these views had called forth. When he at length succeeded in making himself heard, he said : “ I disapprove of the thoughtless expressions which you have reported to me no less than you do yourselves ; but violent passion will not mend matters, least of all will it lead another to different convictions. As regards you, friend Thomas, I have during my short stay here discovered many good and laudable qualities in you, but, at the same time, the worse side of your character has not escaped my notice. You are apt to condemn somewhat rashly things upon which you can scarcely have seriously reflected. I am far from taking these inconsiderate expressions as really your own convictions ; you have heard or read them somewhere in your travels, and now you repeat them as if their accuracy could not be gainsaid. This I must severely censure in you, friend Thomas. Gladly would I have spared this reproof for another time when I could have given it to you alone ; but by your inconsiderate language you have offended our brethren and wounded their religious feeling, and you must therefore permit me to obtain for them this little satisfaction.”

Thomas admitted that he had once read a book which contained the views he had just expressed, and he thought he had made a mistake in not keeping his own counsel about

his convictions, instead of honestly communicating them to others.

“Stop, Thomas!” interrupted the pastor; “God forbid that you should become a hypocrite. I did not censure the expression of your convictions, but that you did not seek better to inform yourself, and that you permitted yourself so thoughtlessly to repeat the words of others. But I hope it will not be difficult for you to correct your erroneous views. A few moments ago, when I entered your assembly, you immediately took off your hat. Why did you do this, Thomas?”

Thomas—Why, to salute you politely, and show you my reverence.

Pastor—But does reverence consist in taking off the hat and in saluting?

Thomas—Not in that, to be sure; but thereby I show you that I revere and esteem you.

Pastor—Then the uncovering of the head is an outward sign, or, what is the same, a ceremony, used to give evidence of the interior sentiments of respect and esteem. See, Thomas, here I have surprised you in making use of external ceremonies, and you do not reserve them for divine worship, but you employ them even in your daily intercourse with others. Moreover, taking off your hat is not the only one of such usages that you observe. If you wish to express to some one your kind feelings or wishes, you shake him by the hand; if you would assure another of the truth of some utterance, you lay your hand upon your heart; and when you returned from your travels perhaps you even embraced many of your old friends to express your joy at meeting them again. Do you see how many external ceremonies or usages you, as well as every one else, observe daily to express outwardly the sentiments of your heart? Do you not think, then, that the same is also quite natural in the worship of God?

All agreed that the pastor had not by any means mentioned all such customs, and nearly every one could name one sign or another by which in every-day life men show their sentiments or express their feelings. When the general conversation had again ceased, Thomas admitted that he did not, indeed, think of this, and that the pastor was certainly right. At the same time he asked permission to submit another doubt which still remained in his mind ; perhaps his Reverence could also clear up that.

The pastor replied : “ I permit not only you but every one here present to ask for any explanation he may desire, and it will even afford me great pleasure if you give me an opportunity of contributing to your better information.”

Thomas—What I wished to say is this : I admit that in our dealings with men we need these external signs, because they cannot see into our hearts, but God knows our inmost thoughts without our first expressing them outwardly.

Pastor—You are right, Thomas ; God does not need this outward evidence—he knows better than we do the state of our souls—but *we* need them. For, in the first place, if our sentiments are true and sincere, it is not even in our power to conceal them. As the despairing wretch involuntarily wrings his hands and tears his hair, so the man filled with reverence naturally falls upon his knees, and the devout man naturally folds his hands. It is a comfort for us if we can outwardly show our feelings, and we often suffer much pain when we are compelled to conceal them. Secondly, our feelings are even intensified if we have an opportunity of manifesting them exteriorly. We can offer to God mental prayers very reverently and devoutly, but if we cast ourselves upon our knees and lift up our hands, we feel how thereby our humility and reverence for God are increased, and how our devotion becomes more fervent ; we then endeavor to awaken in our heart what we express in our posture. And, finally, we thereby give to others an evidence of our sentiments. If

from our attitude they notice our devotion and reverence for God, they are stimulated to follow our example, and we, in turn, are again edified by them. I am sure you will all admit that one can pray much more devoutly in a church where the deportment of all is devout and edifying, than in a church where those present, however pious they may feel at heart, give no external signs of devotion.

All, even Thomas, conceded this, and one of the seniors of the assembly remarked that on no day of the year could he pray more fervently and heartily than on the day of the first communion of the children, when the little ones showed so evidently their piety and deep emotion.

Pastor—Be assured your pastor therein shares your experience. And from this you may know how important, and even how necessary, it is that each one should show by outward marks his pious feelings, and that such action cannot be called superstitious. If in our age, which is called the age of progress, any one should have progressed so far as no longer to need such external rites or ceremonies, we might have reason to fear that his soul was also devoid of piety and devotion. If it were left to the discretion or judgment of each one to choose in what manner to manifest the pious disposition of his heart at divine worship, much impropriety and singularity would creep in. Hence the apostles ordained that at divine worship all things should be done “decently and according to order” (1 Cor. xiv. 40). The successors of the apostles, the popes and bishops, have always taken care and have given directions that everything be done with decency and in a becoming manner; and by them have been ordained the rites and ceremonies observed at divine worship at the present day. You remarked a moment ago, Thomas, that the ceremonies were derived from Judaism. It is true the Jews had ceremonies, and they were even very numerous, and the apostles, as well as their successors, adapted some of them to the Christian worship; but the

Jews did not have ceremonies because they were Jews, nor have the Christians any because they are Christians. We find external rites and ceremonies among both Jews and Christians because they are men, and, as such, they need external rites to express their interior sentiments. I have, moreover, to remark that among the Jews many ceremonies were types and figures of the coming Messiah, intended to prepare the people for the coming of Christ. When the Messiah had appeared these were naturally abolished.

Thomas—Still, Christ says that God is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, and censures the Jews for their many ceremonies.

Pastor—The ceremonies of the ancient covenant were ordained by God himself, and therefore the Son of God could not have had the intention of condemning them. And, in deed, it was not the ceremonies, but the manner in which the Jews observed them, that provoked the displeasure of the Saviour. They observed with anxious scrupulosity all these external rites, not in order thereby to express their pious sentiments, but as if God must necessarily be pleased with them, even if they were unaccompanied by interior piety. Besides, the Jews were not nearly as scrupulous in their daily life as they were in the observance of the ceremonial ordinances. While nothing could induce them to disregard a single one of these ceremonies, they did not scruple to defraud the widow and the orphan, or to oppress their fellow-men. It was against this hypocrisy that the Saviour uttered his bitterest reproof; and he would condemn as severely even now any Christian who, with a life of wickedness, sought by the mere observance of external ceremonies to serve God and obtain the praise of men. This, too, is the meaning of the words of Christ: Thou shalt worship God in spirit and in truth—*i.e.*, in the inmost heart, and not merely by outward appearance.

Thomas—Reverend Father, you will pardon me, I'm sure

if I still ask one or two more questions. Since you have been kind enough to answer me thus far, I would like to take advantage of the opportunity to have all my doubts cleared up. Now, it seems to me that if Christ intended to tolerate ceremonies in his Church, he would not have left the appointment of them to his apostles, and to their successors in later times, but would have instituted them himself.

Pastor—There are rites or ceremonies which men use instinctively, and these all observe without any special appointment or institution. Thus, for instance, the humble man naturally casts his eyes to the ground, and the devout man raises them to heaven. Other ceremonies may differ according to time, place, or circumstance, and these Christ could hardly have ordained once for all, but left it to his representatives to appoint them as occasion required. Nor could the apostles have established a ritual for all time, because altered circumstances might make other changes necessary. Thus, for instance, with truly pious people, divine service at midnight could be most beautiful and edifying, while for the irreligious and corrupt it might be the occasion of sinful excesses. Again, it is most elevating solemnly to celebrate divine service in a beautiful and spacious temple, but during the times of the persecutions the early Christians were compelled to assemble in underground vaults and crypts. In the very beginning of the Church, when the faithful assembled to commemorate the institution of the Holy Eucharist and to partake of the Most Blessed Sacrament, they also partook, after the example of Christ, of a banquet or supper, called love-feast; but the disorder which occurred on these occasions compelled even the apostles to do away with these feasts, and subsequently the Church ordained that Communion should only be received fasting. That Christ himself did not disdain or despise these external rites we can see from his life. He accepted the homage of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he was pleased when they met him

with branches of palm on his entry into their city, and when they spread their garments upon the ground before him. He permitted Mary Magdalene to anoint his feet, and he himself made use of external ceremonies in his miraculous healing of the afflicted. He gave sight to the blind man by spreading spittle mingled with clay upon his eyes (John ix.); when he was asked to heal the deaf-mute he took him aside from the multitude, put his fingers into his ears, and, spitting, he touched his tongue and looked up to heaven (Mark vii.) Finally, I have to remark that Christ did really institute rites and ceremonies which were to be practised in his Church and which are actually observed. He himself ordained that the cleansing from original sin should take place by baptism—that is, by an external washing with water. When instituting the Holy Eucharist he took bread and wine, gave thanks, cast his eyes to heaven, etc. If I should now put to you the question why Christ ordained ceremonies in connection with his sacraments, would you be able to answer the question?

Simon, one of the seniors of the assembly, ventured the opinion: This was done, undoubtedly, to intimate to us by this outward sign what particular grace Christ would confer upon us in each sacrament.

Pastor—You have answered correctly. He employs these outward signs because he has to deal with human beings, who need such sensible signs. And it is not only ourselves who must employ some visible sign to make known our sentiments, because they are invisible, but the God-man appeared in human form upon earth, and suffered death for us, in order that all this might give us an external, visible pledge of our redemption.

Thomas—Yet, Your Reverence, I am of the opinion that the number of ceremonies in the Catholic Church is rather too great, and that it is not really necessary to manifest our devotion and piety in such manifold ways.

Pastor—If there were but one star visible in the heavens,

would not that alone suffice to remind us of the greatness and wisdom of God ? And yet God has studded the firmament with millions of stars, in order that in them we might recognize and admire his omnipotence. Behold ! God has chosen to manifest himself to us as Creator in a munificent and glorious manner. So, too, in the animal and vegetable kingdoms he might have omitted many species without leaving a want unsupplied, and we might have abundantly recognized him in the rest. It was not necessary to clothe the flowers in such rich and varied colors, yet it has pleased God to do so, and truly he has “made all things well.”

Thomas—You mean to say that the ceremonies at divine worship are like the flowers in creation, intended for greater ornament ?

Pastor—For greater ornament and greater edification. We must only know them. The more we inquire into the countless species of plants and animals, and the more we study their wonderful construction and mode of life, the more will we be filled with awe for their Creator, whom we recognize in them. And the better we are informed about the manifold religious ceremonies and their signification, the more pleasure and profit will we derive from them, and find in them helps for our devotion.

Thomas thanked the pastor for his kind instruction, and declared that he was now convinced that one could also have other views concerning the matter, and what he had formerly heard and read he had unsuspectingly accepted as the truth without further reflection. Yet he felt himself impelled candidly to confess that there was still much in the Catholic Church to which he could not be reconciled, although in this he might be wrong. If his Reverence would permit he would occasionally pay him a visit and submit his doubts to him. The pastor gave the assurance that he would most cheerfully receive Thomas, or any one else who might come to him on such an errand. In the meanwhile the aged

Simon had conferred with several of the assembly, and, on their behalf, now addressed the venerable priest :

Dear Father, your remarks a few moments ago about the importance of well understanding the meaning of the rites of the Church, in order to appreciate them, has brought home to us our deficiency in this respect. How much more beautiful, indeed, divine service would appear to us, and how much greater would be our devotion whilst attending it, if we were thoroughly instructed in the ceremonies of the Church ! Would it not be possible for you occasionally, as you have done this evening, to explain one or the other of them ? You may certainly count upon interested and attentive listeners.

Pastor—This laudable wish can be gratified. I am prepared to come to your meetings, not only occasionally, but regularly on stated days, and, in as far as lies in my power, to explain to you successively the different ceremonies and usages that occur throughout the ecclesiastical year.

Simon—We beg to assure you of our thankfulness in advance ; and if Thomas has any more doubts he may then state them. Your answers to his objections will be equally advantageous to us all. He need not fear our displeasure, for in consequence of his questions to-day we have received a most profitable instruction.

Pastor—I fully agree with you. But in order that I may be the better prepared to meet all your difficulties, it will be best for you to reflect in advance upon what points you wish an explanation, and then ask me for the desired information. You, Simon, may put the questions for yourself and the others ; if then there be any who are too timid to ask a question, they may tell you what they wish to have explained. By this arrangement I do not, however, wish to deny to any one the privilege of himself putting any question he may please.

It had now become quite late. The pastor appointed the

days upon which he would attend the meetings, and proposed that, if unfavorable weather at any time prevented their assembling in the open air, the meeting should be held in the large hall of the school. All were satisfied with this arrangement, and the good priest retired with the salutation, "Blessed be Christ Jesus"; * many voices, among them Thomas included, answered, "for ever, amen."

* In Catholic Germany "Gelobt sei Jesus Christus" (*Laudetur Jesus Christus*) is a common salutation, especially at meeting the priest, to which an indulgence of 100 days is attached.

Part First.

CHAPTER I.

From the First Sunday of Advent till Septuagesima Sunday.

ATTRACTED by the prospect of so charming and instructive an entertainment, the inhabitants of Christenthal appeared in far greater numbers at the appointed time than on the previous evening. The pastor did not delay long in making his appearance. After kindly greeting the assembly, and surveying with a gratified look the increased audience, the pastor said :

My dear friends, you see that I am prepared to keep my promise. We shall, of course, have to begin with the commencement of the ecclesiastical year. Perhaps you are already aware that this does not, like the secular year, date from the first day of January, but—

Several voices here interrupted : From the first Sunday of Advent ; we remember this from one of your sermons.

Simon—But I do not know why this period is called Advent.

Pastor—During the weeks of Advent we are to prepare for the birth of Jesus Christ, or the *coming of the Redeemer in the flesh*, and to recall to mind the longing of the people of Israel for the promised Saviour. Hence this period is called the coming, or, which is the same, the *Advent*, of the Lord.

You may also learn from this why we begin the ecclesiastical year with the first Sunday of Advent. The Church desires her children to review the entire life of the Divine Saviour, from his birth to the sending of the Holy Ghost. Hence her year begins with the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, which, however, is preceded by the weeks of Advent as a period of preparation.

Simon—Why does the priest use purple vestments at Mass during Advent?

Pastor—The purple color is not the only thing peculiar to this part of the year. The “Gloria” is also omitted at Mass during these weeks, and the priests do not recite the “Te Deum” in their daily office, as they do generally during the rest of the year. All this is done because Advent is a season of sorrow and of penance, during which we should prepare ourselves for the Feast of the Nativity. On penitential days the priest always wears vestments of purple or violet color. The “Gloria in Excelsis” reminds us of the actual coming or the birth of Christ in the flesh, the angels having first chanted it when this glorious event occurred. Now, as we do not yet actually celebrate his nativity, but are still only expecting it, to sing this angelic hymn during Advent would be incongruous. But when the joyful festival of Christmas arrives, on which this hymn was first sung by the angels, we will join in it with the greatest gladness and devotion. The “Te Deum” is omitted during Advent, because it is a hymn of thanksgiving; and as we are not yet celebrating the Incarnation, but are still awaiting it, this hymn of thanks cannot properly be sung. But the word “alleluia” is sung at Mass as it is in the joyful seasons of the year, because the days of Advent are not wholly devoid of joy on account of the sure hope of a coming Redeemer. In former times the season of Advent was also one of fasting, but this custom is now only observed in monasteries or cloisters; the Fridays alone of Advent are kept as fast-days by the faithful in some places,

and the Church directs her children to abstain from worldly amusements and pleasures during this time. Let us now proceed to the feast of the Nativity, or Christmas.

Simon—If you will permit, I would like here to ask why on this festival the priest says three Masses, and why the first is said at midnight?

Paster—This custom, according to all accounts, was introduced by Pope Telesphorus, who presided over the Church from the year 127–139. Pope Gregory the Great (590–604) speaks of it as a well-known matter. He begins a sermon on the Feast of the Nativity in the following words: “Since, by the grace of God, we to-day thrice celebrate holy Mass, we cannot speak long upon the Gospel which you have just heard read; but the birth of our Saviour urges us at least to make a few remarks.” This custom contributes to the greater glorification of the festival. The triple celebration of the holy sacrifice of the Mass reminds us of the triple birth of the Saviour: 1. His eternal generation of the Father; 2. His birth of the Virgin Mary in time; and 3. The spiritual birth of Christ in the hearts of the faithful. The first Mass is said at midnight, because Christ was born at night, as related by St. Luke in his Gospel; and then it is also to remind us that Christ, the light of the world, came into the darkness to enlighten all men.

Thomas—Is it a matter of obligation to hear three Masses on this day, and must these three be said by the same priest?

Paster—We fulfil our obligation if we hear but one Mass, and commit no sin if we do not assist at the other two; but unless we be hindered by grave reasons from hearing three Masses on this day, we would show but little zeal as Christians, were we unwilling to observe this pious custom.

Simon—I have been told that if Christmas falls upon Friday or Saturday the use of meat is allowed on that day. Is this really so?

Pastor—You have been correctly informed.* It was customary among the early Christians never to fast on festival days, and several councils of the Church have even *prohibited* fasting on Sundays or feast-days. To fast on such days was regarded as interfering with the joyous celebration of the day, and as, in a manner, desecrating it. In a council held during the pontificate of Pope Gregory the Great, the ordinance was made to “abstain from meat on Fridays and Saturdays, unless grievous sickness rendered the use of meat necessary, *or a great festival should fall upon one of those days.*” This ancient custom is still observed with regard to Christmas, and the reason is that on this day we should wholly give ourselves up to the gladness occasioned by the Incarnation of the Saviour, and a fast-day would be incompatible with such unbounded joy.

Here the pastor was suddenly interrupted by the voice of a little boy in the meeting, named Joseph, who said: Father, I have a question to ask, too: What is the meaning of the Christmas tree and the Christmas presents?

Pastor—In the garden of Paradise Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, and thus committed a sin of disobedience against their creator and benefactor. By this act they brought themselves and all their posterity into utter misery, and all of us would have remained outcasts for ever if the Only-begotten of the Father had not become man, in order to redeem us from eternal perdition. The Redeemer is, therefore, the most precious and costly gift which the Heavenly Father could bestow upon us. To remind us that on this night the Saviour was given to us, we give presents to each other on Christmas eve. At the same time we are mindful that this new-born Saviour came to die for us on the cross, in order by his death to purchase for us all the gifts and blessings of heaven. To remind us of the tree of the

* Yes, the New Code even extends this privilege to all holidays of obligation outside of Lent.

cross, and the precious fruits which we are to cull from this tree of benediction, we erect on this sacred evening a tree, and adorn it with lights, which represent Christ, who, as the light of the world, came to enlighten all men; we hang upon it beautiful fruits and ornaments and gifts, by which we wish to please each other, especially the children. They represent the graces and benefits which, according to the will of our Redeemer, we are to derive from his death upon the cross. Let us in the future, whether we be young or old, whenever we admire a Christmas tree, or bestow Christmas presents upon each other, call to mind the gracious Incarnation of our Saviour.*

Simon—We shall strive to do this; for, according to the words of our Lord, we must all become like little children in simplicity and innocence, in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven. But we celebrate another festival on which we bestow presents, particularly on children—namely, the feast of St. Nicholas, on the 6th of December. Why do we give presents on this day?

Pastor—St. Nicholas is especially distinguished for having followed and realized in his life the words of our Saviour to which you have just referred. He always retained the virtues, the meekness, the simplicity without guile or malice, and the humility of his tender childhood. Charity in comforting and relieving the distressed seemed his characteristic virtue. Among many other instances it is related that when three young maidens were exposed, through poverty, to fall into vicious ways, he for three successive nights conveyed to them

* In Germany it is the custom to represent the "Christ-child" by a young female dressed in white, who distributes the presents among the children. Before making the distribution she enquires into their conduct during the year, and if this has not been satisfactory the servant of the "Christ-child," called *Knecht Rupert*, administers to each a correction. In this country Santa Claus (St. Nicholas) is represented bringing to the children their Christmas presents. This error, no doubt, originated in the custom of the Dutch settlers of New York, who celebrated the feast of St. Nicholas, much observed in the Netherlands.

through the window, unobserved, a sufficient sum of money to constitute a dowry for each one, and thus enabled them to form honorable marriages. From this circumstance in the life of St. Nicholas originated the custom of giving presents to children on his feast-day.

Simon—Is there any special significance in the fact that the feasts of St. Stephen, St. John, and the Holy Innocents immediately follow Christmas?

Pastor—We may, indeed, find in it a meaning. After the birth of Christ those Saints follow who gave testimony of him, and first in order St. Stephen, as martyr or witness, both in will and in deed, having by the shedding of his blood cheerfully given testimony of Christ; second, St. John, as martyr, in will but not in deed, being ready to give his life for the faith of Christ, but, in accordance with the designs of God, dying a natural death; and, third, the Holy Innocents, as martyrs in deed but not in will, having died for the sake of Christ before they were capable of appreciating the sacrifice made for God. This last of the three is, properly speaking, no feast-day, but rather a day of mourning. The priest wears the purple vestments at Mass and omits the "Gloria" just as in Advent. This is done either to express our compassion for the sorrowing mothers of Bethlehem, or because those children died before the death of Christ, and could not, therefore, at once enter heaven, but had to await in Limbo the death of the Redeemer.

Simon—Now follows the feast of Epiphany.

Pastor—In the language of the Church this festival is called the Feast of the Epiphany, or Manifestation of Christ. Popularly it is also known as the Feast of the Magi, or the three Wise Men. When the Saviour was born his birth was announced to the Jewish shepherds, who directed by the angel, hastened to pay him their homage. Christ had not come, however, exclusively for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles, who were far more numerous. The vocation of

the Gentiles was first made manifest on the day when the Wise Men from the East, themselves Gentiles, came to adore the new-born Saviour. We commemorate, moreover, on this day the baptism of Christ, on which occasion a voice was heard from the heavens declaring him to be the beloved Son of God, thus manifesting to the assembled multitudes his high dignity. Finally, this festival also serves to remind us of the miracle at the wedding of Cana, when, for the first time, Christ manifested his divinity by miraculously changing water into wine.

Simon—I do not remember the order in which the other feasts follow, so that I am at a loss what explanation to ask.

Pastor—The next is the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, also called Candlemas-day.

Simon—True, the blessing of the candles.

Pastor—The reasons why on this day candles are blessed and carried lighted in solemn procession (where this is practicable) are as follows : First, to remind us that the incarnate Son of God is the true light that came into the world to enlighten all men, and that on this day he was carried by his virgin Mother to the Temple and presented as an offering to his Heavenly Father. Secondly, this ceremony reminds us of that moment when the aged Simeon folded the Divine Child in his arms, and with holy joy exclaimed: “ Now my eyes have seen the Light which is to enlighten all nations ! ” This Divine Light has likewise been revealed to our own eyes, and we, too, should fondly enclose Christ Jesus in our hearts. Thirdly, the burning candles which we hold in our hands are to recall to us the words of our Saviour : “ Let your loins be girded, and lamps burning in your hands ” (Luke xii. 35); and again : “ Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven ” (Matt. v. 16). It is our duty as Christians to show unto all men, but more particularly to those subject to us, the light of good example. Finally, the wax of the candles typifies

the immaculate flesh of the humanity of Christ, which was a fruit of the virginal womb of Mary. All this is indicated by the prayers which the Church employs at the blessing of the candles.

Thomas—Of what utility is the blessing of the candles?

Pastor—The priest prays that God may enkindle in the hearts of all those who may carry or use these candles the fire of his divine love, and enlighten them with the light of the Holy Ghost for the welfare of soul and body. He that is not unworthy of such divine favors may confidently hope that God will hear the prayer offered in the name of the entire Church.

Now, my dear friends, our explanations have brought us to that period which serves as a remote preparation for Lent, and I think the lateness of the hour admonishes us to defer the continuation of our instruction to our next meeting.

CHAPTER II.

From Septuagesima Sunday to Passion Sunday.

ON the next meeting the pastor thus began : Our last conference brought us up to Lent, or rather to those Sundays which precede Lent as a preparation or introduction to it. Without waiting to be interrogated I will make a few preliminary explanations. In the early centuries of Christianity the festival of Easter was preceded, as it is at present, by a season of penance and mortification, but not everywhere were the same number of days observed. In some parts of the Church Lent comprised forty days, in others more, in some even seventy days. Besides this it was customary in certain localities to interrupt the fast for several days in the week, and therefore Lent began earlier than at present, so that in counting the single days still forty fast-days would be obtained. Thus, in some countries Lent began with the fiftieth or sixtieth, and even the seventieth, day before Easter ; and this is the reason why the Sundays before Lent still retain the names of Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima—that is, the Sunday which falls within the seventy, sixty, or fifty days' fast. Quadragesima, the ordinary name for the present Sundays of Lent, signifies the Sunday falling within the forty days' fast. In the year 511, and again in the year 541, the Popes and councils of the Church ordained that everywhere, throughout the entire Church, uniformity should be observed in the commencement and duration of this time of penance. With this object in view, forty days, or, including the Sundays (on which, how-

ever, no fast was observed), forty-six days, were appointed. The old names were still retained ; and even now, as regards divine service, these weeks are observed in almost the same manner as in the days of Lent. The priest appears at the altar with the purple vestment ; he no longer says the “Gloria in Excelsis,” and does not pronounce the word “alleluia” at the altar. In his daily office, which he is bound to recite, he likewise omits the alleluia, and says instead : “Praise be to thee, O Lord, king of eternal glory !” The sense of these words is nearly the same, but they have not the joyful sound of the alleluia. Thus in these days the hearts of the faithful are gradually prepared for the approaching time of penance and sorrow for sin, or the days of Lent.

Simon—Why are ashes strewn upon the heads of the faithful at the beginning of Lent ?

Pastor—This is to signify that the time of penance has begun, according to the words of the Church in the breviary : “The days of penance have arrived in order to free ourselves from sin.” Besides, ashes were at all times a sign of penance. Thus the Ninivites strewed their heads with ashes to atone for their sins, and David says figuratively : “I have eaten ashes instead of bread.” Another wholesome significance of this usage is to remind proud and haughty man of his nothingness and to lead him to humility. It is for this reason that the priest, in distributing the ashes, says : “Remember, man, that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return.” Indeed, in order the more forcibly to impress us with the vanity of all things earthly, and particularly with the perishable nature of all worldly joy and greatness, the Church prescribes that the ashes be prepared from the palms that were blessed on the Palm Sunday of the previous year, and which then served to express the joy of the Christians at the glorious entry of Christ into Jerusalem. From the circumstance that ashes are distributed on Wednesday, the first day of Lent, is derived the name of *Ash Wednesday*.

day. Originally the ashes were distributed only to those who were obliged to do public penance, and whose penance began on this day. At a later date others of the faithful, in a spirit of humility and devotion, began gradually to range themselves among these penitents, in order with them to receive the ashes. Finally, in the year 1071, at the Council of Beneventum, it was ordained that the ashes should be distributed to the faithful without distinction, that all might draw suitable profit from this impressive admonition to be mindful of death.

Thomas—It is not to be denied that this practice is a touching and beautiful symbol; but as to fasting, I don't know, indeed, what purpose that is to serve. It is my opinion that whoever lives temperately fasts continually, and has no need of torturing himself with special fast-days.

Pastor—Friend Thomas, you are again somewhat rash and precipitate in your judgment. Every Christian is held to temperance, independently of the precept to observe the fast; but, besides this, he is not exempt from the obligation of, at times, practising greater abnegation. If you ask me for the reasons why we should, from time to time, be called upon to observe special days of fast while otherwise leading a temperate life, I can adduce many that are weighty and urgent. In the first place, we fast in order to punish ourselves for our sins. If we seriously consider how often we have offended God, how much the Saviour has suffered for our sakes in order to reconcile us with his Heavenly Father and to sanctify us, and how ungrateful we are in continuing to offend him, then must we indeed be filled with a just indignation against ourselves, and feel as if we ought to inflict some self-punishment to make reparation for our ungrateful behavior towards God. This is the genuine proof that our sorrow is real, and that we are in earnest concerning our amendment. Nor is it by any means superfluous to impose such chastisement upon ourselves. Sufferings are, once for all, the con-

sequences of sin ; if we do not impose them voluntarily, God must inflict them upon us, be they sufferings and misfortunes in this life or the pains of purgatory in the next.

Thomas—But does not Christ severely condemn the Pharisees for their rigid fasts, and does he not declare that not what entereth the mouth defileth man, but what cometh from him ? By this he seems particularly to disapprove of the distinction made between flesh-meat and other food.

Pastor—First of all I must call your attention to the fact that fasting does not consist exclusively in abstinence from *food*. Whatever flatters our body or our senses, or even our caprices, is an enjoyment which we frequently esteem more highly than food or drink. In all these we should deny ourselves. Christ, it is true, did censure the Pharisees for their abstinence from food and drink, just as he censured them for the scrupulous observance of ceremonies, because thereby they sought the praise of men. They imagined that by fasting, even without a change of heart, they would necessarily appear pleasing in the sight of God. Hence the Saviour tells us not to parade our fasts before the public, nor go about with a sad and mournful air, that we may be applauded and admired by men on account of our austerities. Therefore he reproves the Pharisees for their too scrupulous observance of the fasts, while, at the same time, they disregarded every duty of fraternal charity. Fasting while leading a sinful and wicked life avails little. Christ has indeed said : “That which entereth by the mouth does not defile man,” and all Christians repeat it after him ; for it is not the quality or quantity of the food by which we violate the fast that defiles us. Food is, in itself, as innocent and harmless on a fast-day as on any other ; but it is the perverse mind and will by which we deliberately transgress the precept of the Church, and become guilty of disobedience towards her. The sin of our first parents consisted in eating of the forbidden fruit. Because this food was a forbidden one, and

because by eating of it they disobeyed God, they became guilty of sin.

Thomas—Then this precept of the Church is the cause of sin. Why is it not left to the discretion of each one to determine when and to what extent he may deem it expedient to fast?

Pastor—This precept of the Church is no more the cause of sin than the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," has ever been the cause of a murder. They who make light of the precept of the Church concerning the fast give evidence that, without a positive precept, they would be still less mindful of the obligation of mortification and self-denial. The appointment of a particular time when to fast, and of the manner of fasting, has the further very important object of teaching us how to obey and to submit our will, which is the cause of the sins we commit. He that is not accustomed to occasional self-denial is exposed to every sin to which his natural evil inclinations may prompt him; but he that has learned to obey the precepts of the Church, will also have the strength and courage to deny himself an indulgence forbidden by the law of God, if at times temptation or passion should invite him to it. Every one may fast at his own discretion; but above all let him fast on those days when the Church has commanded it. Only when he has complied with this obligation is he at liberty to do still more, according to his own promptings. Let him remember that "obedience is better than sacrifice" (1 Kings xv. 22), and that Christ has said: "He that heareth not the Church, let him be unto you as a heathen and a publican" (Matt. xviii. 17).

Simon—But why has the Church set apart just forty days, and why do these immediately precede Easter?

Pastor—In this we follow the example of Christ, who, at the beginning of his public life, fasted forty days and forty nights. These days of penance immediately precede the Feast of Easter, for the following reasons: 1. The time of

the Passion, death, and resurrection of Christ is the most important of the whole ecclesiastical year, because our whole redemption was wrought through these events. We have, therefore, every reason to prepare ourselves with great care and holy earnestness for the commemoration of these sacred mysteries, the more so since the Feast of the Nativity is also preceded by a period of four weeks of preparation. Christ came down upon earth and died for the remission of our sins; and when we recall to mind what Christ has done and suffered for us, ought we not to feel within us a desire also to suffer something for his sake, and particularly during this time to show him our earnest determination to amend our lives? 2. At Easter, or within the Easter time, we are to receive the holy sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist; and herein also lies another incentive not to be wanting in a thorough change of heart and proper mortification of our evil inclinations.

Simon—Is not every day in lent a fast-day? How is it that on certain days the use of meat is allowed?

Pastor—A fast-day consists in eating only one full meal; in other words, in eating only once in the day as much as may satisfy the appetite. This meal is not to be taken before noon. *Fasting*, strictly speaking, has reference to the quantity of food taken rather than to its quality or kind. *Abstinence* has reference to the quality rather than to the quantity, and requires us to *abstain* from certain *kinds* of food. The religious purpose of both being the same, it naturally followed that in practice they were in some measure united, and that, in the Church, fast-days were usually also days of abstinence. For it seemed absurd that he who on a fast-day strove to mortify his appetite by restricting himself to a limited quantity of food, should, at the same time, pamper it by indulging at the single meal in the use of rich and luscious delicacies. The whole matter, both as to fasting and abstinence, lies within the authority of the

Church, and is regulated by her discipline and allowed usages. Thus the Church allows a small amount of food in the morning and in the evening. As regards the kind of food and the amount that may be taken, the approved customs of one's locality may be observed. Abstinence only is enjoined on the Fridays throughout the year. Fast and abstinence are prescribed on the following days: Ash Wednesday, the Fridays and Saturdays in Lent, Ember days, the Vigils of Pentecost, of the Assumption, of All Saints' day, and of Christmas. Fast only is ordained for all other days of Lent except Sundays.

Simon—Was Lent always observed as it is at present?

Pastor—In the main, yes. Some of the oldest Fathers of the Church, among them St. Jerome and St. Leo, speak of Lent as of apostolic institution. Only the *manner* of fasting differed in two particulars. In the first place, the fast was much more rigorous—eggs, butter, and cheese being prohibited in many localities, as is the case still among the Greeks. The Church, always an indulgent mother, subsequently permitted the use of this kind of food. In the second place, but one meal was allowed, and this was never taken before evening. From the thirteenth century the Church permitted this meal to be taken at noon, and allowed in the evening a slight refreshment, called a “collation,” and not exceeding the fourth part of a full meal. The name of “collation,” given to this slight repast, is derived from the monasteries. In these it was customary for the monks to assemble in the evening to listen to the reading of that beautiful book of the Abbott Cassian which bears the title of “*Collationes Patrum*”—“Collection of the Fathers.” After the reading some fruit was handed round for refreshment. This was called “eating at collation.” When the Church afterwards permitted, besides the meal at noon, something to be taken in the evening also, this refreshment received the name of “collation.”

Thomas—But the manner of fasting is not even now everywhere the same. I have found places in which certain days were observed as fast-days, while elsewhere they were not so observed.

Pastor—All the fast-days and abstinence-days are once for all appointed by the Church for the faithful all over the world. But as a multitude of circumstances may arise which render a change of this law necessary, it is left to the bishop of every diocese to regulate the fast according to these circumstances, and either enforce or modify the ordinances of the Church in his diocese. A cold climate, hard and exhaustive labor, want of such food as may be substituted for meat without detriment to health, general sickness or mortality—all these are reasons which may render such a modification necessary. What you have found in certain localities you may even observe in individual households. Whoever is hindered by legitimate cause from observing the Lenten precept may be dispensed therefrom by his pastor.

Thomas—It seems to me that where legitimate causes exist for the non-observance of this precept, there should be no necessity to obtain an exemption or dispensation. I, surely, must be best able to judge whether the grounds that I have for exemption are sufficiently weighty.

Pastor—Thomas, you know it is very hard to be an impartial judge in one's own case. If the grounds for exemption were left to the decision of each individual, the most trivial might be regarded as the most important. But, aside from this, the observance of this law of the Church is, as I have already remarked, an act of obedience and humility. However weighty the reasons may be which entitle us to an exemption, we must not, in this matter, follow our own judgment, but cheerfully submit to the decision of our pastor or confessor, who here decides in the name of the Catholic Church.

Simon—There is one thing more I would like to ask in

this connection—namely, why the precept is given to abstain on Fridays and on Saturdays during Lent.

Pastor—We abstain on Fridays in order by this trifling denial to call to mind the Passion and death of Christ, which took place on this day. Peter of Alexandria, Bishop and Martyr, says: “Abstinence on Friday is commanded, because on this day Jesus was nailed to the cross.” On Saturdays during Lent we practice the same abstinence, in order thereby reverently to commemorate the day on which Christ lay in the grave. Pope Innocent I. writes: “For the abstinence on Saturdays we have the weightiest reason in our reverence for the burial of the Lord.” Now, since both of these men lived only four hundred years after Christ, you may see how ancient is this Christian custom of observing these as days of fast or abstinence.

Let us now, my friends, close our conference for to-day; at our next meeting we shall have much of importance to discuss.

CHAPTER III.

From Passion Sunday to Maundy or Holy Thursday.

SIMON—We have all looked forward to this evening with much pleasure, for no doubt there will be many things of interest and edification to explain to us concerning Holy Week.

Pastor—You are right, my dear people. There is no period of the year so rich in significant and edifying ceremonies as Holy Week. To the Passion of our Redeemer we owe our salvation, and the Church has left nothing undone to make the days on which we commemorate this tragic but blessed event replete with instruction and benediction.

Simon—Will you, then, give us an explanation of the ceremonies of Holy Week this evening?

Pastor—A part of them, at least, can be made the subject of our consideration, and whatever we cannot accomplish this evening for lack of time, can be postponed until our next meeting. Our former conference brought us to Passion Sunday. This Sunday is so called because we begin more immediately and specially to occupy ourselves with the Passion of our Lord from this day.

Simon—Why are the crucifixes and pictures veiled on Passion Sunday?

Pastor—1. Because the Gospel of this Sunday relates how Christ hid himself from the Jews, who attempted to stone him to death.

2. To give evidence of the deep sorrow of the Church, the Spouse of Christ, which she experiences in these days at the ineffable sufferings of the Saviour. Therefore, too, the

cloth with which the crucifixes are veiled is of purple color—the color of penance and sorrow—and on Good-Friday they are even black, to express her still deeper grief. Only on one day—the day on which we commemorate the institution of the Most Blessed Sacrament, on Holy Thursday—are these veils replaced by others of the more cheerful white color.

Simon—Now, Palm Sunday is next in order. I think I can guess the meaning of the palms.

Pastor—Well, what do you think ?

Simon—No doubt the palms represent the triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem, on which occasion the inhabitants of that holy city spread their garments upon the ground, and strewed branches of palm in his way, and saluted him with exultant cries of “Hosanna, Son of David !”

Pastor—You are right. Hence in many churches a procession is held, in which blessed palms are borne by those taking part in it, and we are reminded of the words of the prophet Zacharias : “Behold, thy King cometh to thee meek, and sitting upon an ass and a colt.” He was seated upon an ass to teach us to despise the glories of the world. And St. Augustine says : “The branches of palm are signs of praise, and point to the victory which by his death Christ would win over the grave, and by which, with the victorious sign of the cross, he would conquer the prince of death—Satan.” The palms also signify the good works with which we must appear before God, if we would find favor in his eyes. Upon this point a great bishop has said : “We go to meet Christ with the children if we preserve our innocence ; we carry olive-branches if we practise the works of mercy, peace, and meekness ; we carry palms if we conquer Satan and vice ; we carry verdant branches if we are adorned with beautiful virtues ; we cast our garments upon the way if we mortify the flesh and despise the vanity and display of dress.”

Simon—I think we shall all strive to meet the Saviour with such verdant branches. But why are the palms blessed ?

Pastor—The prayers of the Church which are used at the blessing of the palms will answer your question. The priest prays, in the name of the Church, that God would bless the dwellings in which the branches are preserved; that he would enable us, by good works, to become more perfect in our vocation; and that finally we may be found worthy to enter triumphant and glorious with Christ into the heavenly Jerusalem.

Simon—Why does the priest, at the end of the procession, thrice knock at the door of the church before it is opened?

Pastor—He takes the cross, which is carried at the head of the procession, and thrice strikes with its staff upon the door, to indicate that heaven was closed to the just till the advent of Christ, and that he, by his death upon the cross, opened its gates and merited for us admission thereto. Therefore also he speaks, in the name of Christ, the words taken from the twenty-third Psalm: "Lift up your gates, O ye princes! and be lifted up, O eternal gates! and the King of Glory shall enter in." And to the question, "Who is this King of Glory?" the priest replies: "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."

Among the hymns which are sung at this procession, and which have reference to the entry of Christ into Jerusalem, the following deserves particular attention:

To thee, O Christ! be glory, praises loud;
 To thee "Hosanna!" cried the Jewish crowd.
 We Israel's Monarch, David's son proclaim;
 Thou com'st, blest King, in God's most holy name.
 Angels and men, in one harmonious choir
 To sing thy everlasting praise, conspire.
 Thee Israel's children met with conquering palms;
 To thee our vows we pay with loudest psalms.
 To thee, on earth, with boughs they strewed the ways;
 To thee, in heaven, we sing melodious praise.
 Accept this tribute which to thee we bring,
 As thou didst theirs, O good and gracious King!

Bishop Theodulph of Orleans is the author of this beautiful hymn. During the reign of King Louis of France, surnamed the Pious, he was falsely accused of conspiracy against the king, and was in consequence thrown into prison. When on Palm Sunday the procession passed before the prison, he sang the above hymn, and the king, who took part in the procession, was so well pleased with it that he immediately liberated the bishop and restored him to his diocese.

Simon—Why is the office which is chanted on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of Holy Week called “Tenebræ”?

Pastor—Formerly this service was held in the night-time. This is to remind us that the Redeemer was taken prisoner in the darkness, and that throughout the whole night he endured countless sufferings and ignominies. At the same time the Church endeavors, by this nocturnal office, to give expression to the deep grief which she feels in contemplating the sufferings of her Spouse, for the silence and darkness of night have ever been regarded as a time of sadness and mourning. This service is, moreover, especially calculated to fill us with sorrow. The solemn chant is unaccompanied by the organ, and the Lamentations of Jeremias are sung, in which the prophet bewails the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of the Jews, but still more their forgetfulness of God, for which they deserved this terrible punishment. When listening to these chants, we are to remember that our sins and unfaithfulness to God have been the cause of the sufferings and death of Christ; and, therefore, at the end of each one of the Lamentations we are exhorted to penance by the words: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, be converted to thy God and Lord.” By the term Jerusalem we and the entire Christian people are meant. Throughout the year the divine office begins with the words: “Open my mouth, O Lord! and let my lips announce thy praise.” This petition is here omitted, because, in our profound grief, we scarcely have the

heart to make our prayer a hymn of praise to the Lord. For the same reason the Psalms are terminated without the usual "Glory be to the Father," etc., for in these days the Son of God was denied, by his unworthy creatures, the tribute of honor and glory that was his due. At the beginning of the office the supplication is omitted: "Hear, O God! my supplication; be attentive to my prayer," because He from whom alone all help can come died in utter helplessness upon the cross for our sins, exclaiming: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The several lessons which are read at Matins usually begin with a formula imploring the mercy and compassion of God for us, and they end with the prayer, "But thou, O Lord! have mercy upon us." These invocations are likewise omitted, because the Heavenly Father did not even spare his own Son, but delivered him up for our sins. All the canonical hours of these days are terminated with the words: "Christ became obedient for us unto death." On the eve of Holy Saturday the following words are added, which afford us a certain consolation and a glimmer of hope: "Christ became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God hath also exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name" (Philip. ii. 8, 9). No "*Dominus vobiscum*" is said to ask the blessing of God upon the people, and the conclusion of the prayer, "who livest and reignest, with God the Father and the Holy Ghost, world without end," is not said aloud, but is added in silence by every one present, because on this day the glory and divinity of the Son of God, and his equality with the Father and the Holy Ghost, were profoundly hidden. Finally, in the course of the service all the lights are gradually extinguished, so that at last the church and sanctuary are in comparative darkness. Hence the name of "*Tenebræ*"—darkness—given to this service, in which everything marks the sadness and desolation of souls sorrowing with their Lord in his sufferings.

Simon—Your Reverence has just alluded to something about which I had intended to ask an explanation. I have noticed that at the office of the Tenebræ fifteen lighted candles, in the form of a pyramid, are placed on the Epistle side of the sanctuary; these are extinguished one after the other, and finally also the six large candles upon the altar are put out. No doubt this has a special meaning.

Pastor—The burning candles signify the light of faith preached by the prophets and Jesus Christ. The fundamental article of our faith is the Blessed Trinity, represented by the triangular candlestick. The successive extinction of the candles reminds us of how the prophets who had, one after the other, given testimony to Christ, were not heard by the people, but were persecuted, and sometimes put to death, until finally, in the rejection of Christ himself—the Light of the world—his ungrateful people were totally deprived of the light of faith. The last candle, the one at the point of the triangle, represents Jesus Christ himself. This is not extinguished, but only hidden for a time behind or under the altar, and afterwards brought out again, still burning, to show the glorious resurrection of Christ on the third day after his death. The darkness which pervades the sanctuary naturally reminds us of the darkness that covered the whole earth at the death of Christ, as well as of the still greater darkness which prevailed in the hearts of those who, from perversity of will, refused to believe in the Redeemer. Now, Christ is also a light for us, and he will hide himself from our view, and permit us to walk in darkness and wickedness, if we persistently close our eyes to his heavenly light.

Here the voice of little Joseph was heard in the meeting, asking the meaning of the rattling noise made at the end of the Tenebræ.

Pastor—The noise made with wooden clappers at the conclusion of the office represents the confusion of nature at the death of its Author, when the earth trembled, the rocks

were rent, the graves opened, and the veil of the Temple was torn from the top to the bottom.

Simon—I never could understand why, during these days, wooden clappers were used instead of bells.

Pastor—This is done for the same reason that the sounds of the organ and other musical instruments are hushed—namely, to express our deep grief and to move us to still deeper sorrow. The sound of the bells is of itself calculated to lift us to glad and joyous mood; we feel inspired with devotion if on some beautiful festival the melodious chimes of the bells invite us to the temple of the Lord. It is true, we also make use of them on sorrowful occasions—for instance, at funerals—and then they call forth feelings of sadness and compassion. But if for several days everything around us is dead and silent, and we do not hear the accustomed sound of the bell, the mournful solemnity of these days fills our souls with still deeper grief, and it is the intention of the Church that we should in this manner commemorate the time of the Passion and death of Christ. The bells are furthermore a type or figure of the apostles, who preached Christ crucified to all the world, and “the sound of whose voices reached to the ends of the earth.” But inasmuch as during these days these witnesses of Christ hid themselves from fear of the Jews, and were silent, so, too, we silence the bells, their symbols. Only on Saturday are the bells rung again, because after the resurrection, which we solemnize in the Mass of this day, the apostles again appeared, giving to each other the news of the resurrection of the Lord, and communicating it to others. Finally, when we are called to the divine service by the sound of these wooden clappers, we may also be reminded of the fact that during these days all nations were called to the knowledge of God and eternal happiness by the wood of the cross.

Simon—Your Reverence, I am requested by my neighbor

here to ask why the Thursday of Holy Week is called Maundy Thursday; and, to tell the truth, I myself am ignorant on this point.

Pastor—The Roman Missal and Breviary call this day “*feria quinta in cœna Domini*”—that is, Thursday of the Lord’s Supper—being the day when our Lord at his Last Supper, on the eve of his Passion, instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist and the holy sacrifice of the mass. It is also popularly called Maundy Thursday from the ceremony of washing the feet—a *mandatum* or command given by the Saviour to his apostles. If you have no further questions to ask, I will proceed at once to explain the rites peculiar to this day. The Church, even in the midst of her grief, allows on Maundy Thursday some joy and gratitude for the mighty boon conferred upon her children in the divine institution of the Blessed Eucharist. Upon entering the church the symptoms of joy will at once be seen. Though her ornaments are veiled, yet they are covered with white and the altar is somewhat ornamented. However, only one Mass may be said in a church on this day. Even where there are more than one priest only one of them celebrates Mass, and the others receive at his hands Holy Communion, but only under the species of bread, as do the rest of the faithful. The reason of this is because on this day Christ alone offered the august Sacrifice and then gave Holy Communion to his apostles.

THE WASHING OF THE FEET is another ceremony peculiar to this day, as I have already stated, and is observed in many places. In former times, when only sandals were worn, one of the first acts of hospitality which was shown to a stranger or a guest was the washing of his feet; if this was performed by his host it was the greatest evidence of attention and respect, and the higher the dignity of him who performed it, the greater the testimony of condescension on his part and of honor to the stranger. The Saviour, desirous of giving an

example of humility to those to whom he had formerly said, "Learn from me, because I am meek and humble of heart," performed this office for his apostles, telling them that they ought, by so doing, to imitate his example. In Rome the Holy Father, the Pope, on this day washes the feet of thirteen priests, generally selected from the different nationalities. Why thirteen are chosen is still a question among rubricists. Some say that the thirteenth represents St. Paul, others that he is for Matthias, while some will have him to represent the host at whose house Christ celebrated his Last Supper with his apostles, and whose feet, they say, were also washed by the Saviour. The custom of performing this ceremony is so ancient that no period can be fixed when it was introduced, and this fact may explain the difficulty in accounting for the number thirteen.

After having given the blessing from the *loggia*, or gallery, in front of the Church of St. Peter, the Pope goes to one of the chapels of the basilica, where the washing of the feet takes place. The priests whose feet are to be washed are seated on an elevated bench, wearing white habits, and having on their heads high white caps—the ancient dress of pilgrims. The stocking on the right foot of each is cut, to be easily opened, so as to leave the front of the foot bare. The Holy Father, girded with a towel of fine cloth, and attended by his master of ceremonies, proceeds to the washing. The Pontiff kneels and rubs the foot with water, poured by an assistant into a silver-gilt basin, and, after drying it with a towel, the Holy Father kisses the foot. The towel and a nosegay are then handed by a deacon to each priest. The papal treasurer then follows with a purse of crimson velvet, and gives to each a coin of gold and one of silver (originally intended to pay the expenses of his journey home). It is usual for the Pope to have a dinner prepared on this day, in one of the halls of the Vatican palace, for the *apostles*—as the priests whose feet have been washed are called. His

Holiness attends to bless the table, and pours the water as they wash their hands, and serves the dishes handed to him by prelates from a sideboard. Then, having filled the glass of each with wine, he bestows his blessing and retires.

THE BLESSING OF THE HOLY OILS likewise takes place on this day. At the cathedral churches the bishop alone celebrates Mass, in the course of which the oil for Baptism, the oil of unction for the sick, as well as the Holy Chrism for Confirmation, are blessed by the bishop. On this occasion the bishop is surrounded by twelve priests in white chasubles. The twelve priests remind us of the apostles who on this day surrounded their Divine Master. Besides this, there are present seven deacons and seven subdeacons in white dalmatics. Certain prescribed prayers and the sign of the cross are used in blessing the oils, to remind us that the death of the Lord upon the cross is the source of all blessing for us. The bishop and the twelve priests breathe upon the oil, to indicate that by the unction with the oil we receive the Holy Ghost, as Christ imparted the Holy Spirit to his apostles by breathing upon them. Balsam is mixed with the chrism. This is to teach us that through the sacraments our souls are healed and fortified, just as balsam is soothing and strengthening for the body, and that by means of the sacraments we are to become pleasing in the eyes of God—a grateful odor, as it were, just as we prize the balsam for its fragrance; and, finally, that by the reception of these means of grace we may preserve our souls from the infection of sin, in the same manner as we use balsam to preserve the bodies of the dead from corruption. The blessing being ended, the bishop and the twelve priests salute the oil by singing, “Hail, holy oil! hail, holy chrism!” By this they express the joy of the faithful that the Redeemer has instituted the sacraments in the administration of which these holy oils are used, and by which, through the grace of God, we are cleansed from sin and fortified for a life of righteousness.

On Good Friday, as you are aware, no Mass is said; therefore two Hosts are consecrated at the Mass of Thursday, one of which is reserved for the service on the following day. After Mass this consecrated Host is placed in a veiled chalice and carried in solemn procession to a side altar adorned with lights and ornaments, where it is kept till the next day. The Church is wholly taken up during this week with the sufferings of Christ, and for that reason has set apart another day in the year to give thanks for the institution of the Most Holy Eucharist, yet she could not refrain from some expression of her joy and gratitude on this the very day when our Lord was pleased to give us so wonderful a pledge of his love. Therefore the Blessed Sacrament is removed from the principal altar, where the pomp and splendor of the solemn worship would interfere with the office of the Tenebræ, and an opportunity is thus given to the faithful of returning thanks for this inestimable boon. Devout Christians flock to the churches in great throngs. In cities where there are many churches it is customary to visit several or all of them, for the purpose of adoring the Blessed Sacrament.

Now I will explain to you the stripping of the altar. By this rite the Church would call to our minds how Christ, who is represented by the altar, was despoiled of his garments. Hence the priest while performing this ceremony, which takes place after Mass, recites the twenty-first Psalm, which is a clear and minute prophecy of the Passion of Christ, and in which the words occur, "They have divided my garments among them."

One of the assembly asked why on Good Friday the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was not celebrated, but the pastor replied: "I shall defer the conference upon Good Friday for our next meeting; until then may God keep you in his holy care!"

CHAPTER IV.

Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

THE pastor, who from the parsonage could overlook the place of meeting, noticed, on the evening appointed for the next assembly, which happened to be a Sunday, that a large circle of his parishioners had already gathered long before the hour fixed, and therefrom concluded that his instructions were listened to with increased pleasure and interest. Although fatigued by the ministerial labors of the day, he did not wish to tax their patience, and therefore was soon in the midst of his beloved flock.

My dear friends (he began), I thought that if your zeal prompted you to come so early I ought not to keep you waiting; and, indeed, it will do no harm if to-day we begin our conference a little earlier than usual, for we shall have much to speak of. I still owe you an answer to a question put at our last meeting, but I deem it better to go over the ceremonies of Good Friday in the order in which they follow, and then we will also reach the question referred to.

Simon—Your Reverence, there are many questions which I could propose; but I do not know all the rites of Good Friday, and still less the order in which they follow. You will, no doubt, be kind enough to aid us.

Pastor—Well, then, as soon as the priest arrives at the altar he throws himself prostrate at the foot of the same, with his face to the floor, in order thereby profoundly to humble himself before the Lord, who on this day humbled himself even unto the death of the cross. At the same time

he expresses by this act the deep affliction of the Church on account of the sufferings of her Divine Spouse. After having remained a while in this posture, he ascends the steps of the altar and reads a lesson from the Prophet Osee, chapter vi., beginning with the following words: "In their affliction they will rise early to me, and say, Come and let us return to the Lord; for he hath stricken us, and he will heal us: he will strike, and he will cure us. He will revive us after two days. On the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." These words, applied to Christ, precede the whole service of to-day for a consolation, as it were, permitting us through the gloom of his Passion to descry a ray of the glory of his future resurrection. Every Christian whom God visits with affliction should apply these words of the prophet to himself; for by means of tribulation God always leads us to glory here or hereafter. The priest then prays that God would not permit his sufferings to redound to our malediction, as they did to that of Judas, but to our salvation, as in the case of the penitent thief; that he would cleanse us of our sins, and give us the grace of his resurrection. Then he reads from the second book of Moses (Exodus xii.) those passages which prescribe the manner in which the Jews were to slay and eat the paschal lamb; this paschal lamb of the Jews was a figure of the Victim of redemption. And then is read the account of how the Paschal Lamb of the new covenant was slain and sacrificed on that day—namely, the history of the Passion, as related by St. John (chap. xviii. and xix.)

Simon—If I mistake not, the Passion is read or sung several times during Holy Week.

Pastor—Yes, four times—namely, on Palm Sunday, on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday—each time according to a different Evangelist. The account by St. John is peculiarly appropriate to Good Friday, since he was the only Evangelist who was present at the awful scenes, and therefore gave tes-

timony of what he saw. The ancient mode of reciting tragedy was by one, and subsequently by two or more persons, who related the history in solemn chant. The way in which the Passion is sung to-day is a remnant of this ancient solemnity. The historical part is sung by one voice, a baritone ; that which is said by the different personages concerned is sung by a tenor voice ; the words spoken by the crowd is chanted by the choir, and the expressions of the Saviour are sung by a bass voice.

Simon—Why do all kneel at a certain part of the Passion ?

Pastor—When the fact of Christ bowing down his head to give up the ghost is related, all kneel, and in some churches they kiss the ground. This is done to adore Him who thus, for our sakes, was overwhelmed with the sorrows of death. This being the anniversary of the great day of expiation, when Christ laid down his life for all mankind, the priest at the altar to-day implores mercy for all. Intercession is made for all orders and degrees, for the whole Church—for the Pope, for all bishops, priests, deacons, and all in orders ; for confessors, virgins, widows, and all religious communities ; and for all the people of God, for temporal sovereigns, and for the catechumens. He also prays for the removal of error, of disease and famine ; entreats the liberation of captives, safe return of travellers, health of the sick, and safe arrival at their proper harbors to those who are tossed upon the ocean. In tones of supplication the Church prays for heretics, schismatics, Jews, and pagans, that God would open their eyes and lead them to the knowledge of truth in the Church of Christ.

Simon—At each of these prayers I have noticed the priest bends his knee, but I have been told that at the prayer for the Jews he does not do so ; why is this ?

Pastor—The priest bends the knee at each one of these prayers to indicate the intensity of his supplications ; and the faithful are called upon to do so likewise by the words of

the deacon, *Flectamus genua*—let us bend the knee; and then they are invited to rise by the voice of the subdeacon, *Levate*. At the prayer for the Jews this is omitted, because on this day their fathers in mockery bent their knees before the Saviour, and derided him as the shadow of a king, and thus desecrated this expression of adoration towards Christ.

Thomas—Only on this day, then, the Catholic Church prays for those who are outside of her pale ?

Pastor—Throughout the year the Church prays that God would spread the true faith, extirpate error, bless all men in body and in soul, lead them to the light of the Gospel, and by it prepare them for eternal salvation. From this it follows that on no day in the year are those who are not Catholics or not Christians excluded from her intercession. On this day, however, she particularly mentions them.

Thomas—Does the Catholic Church really believe and teach that one can only be saved as a Catholic ?

Pastor—Thomas, considering your whole training and the peculiar direction of your mind, I was convinced that sooner or later you would ask this question. The Catholic Church believes that Christ did not come into this world without a purpose, but that his revelation of the eternal truths which he brought upon earth, and his sacrifice upon the cross, were necessary for the salvation and eternal happiness of men. He, therefore, that would gain heaven can only gain it through Jesus Christ. “No other name under heaven is given to men whereby they may be saved” (Acts iv. 12). Were it otherwise we would have to ask why Christ came into the world, lived in it for thirty-three years, publicly preached for three years, and finally suffered death upon the cross ; we would have to ask why the apostles and their successors took the trouble to cross vast seas and to journey into distant lands, and gave up their lives to preach the doctrines of Him crucified ; why, finally, our ancestors, even amid persecutions, espoused Christianity, and why we ourselves are Christians. Therefore

only the doctrine of Jesus Christ can save us. Furthermore, it is not sufficient simply to believe in Christ in a general and vague manner, and to profess only a portion of his truth ; but we must believe the whole teachings of the Saviour, without addition or diminution. Christ did not say that we were to hold some of his truths, whilst we might reject others ; only his *whole and genuine doctrine* can save us. Where now are we to find the genuine teachings of Christ—that doctrine which alone can save us ? On the one hand we find various parties, each one presenting a different doctrine as the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and even the individual members of these parties each holding different doctrines, and claiming them to be the true and genuine teaching of Christ. If we tell them that their party or sect is new and has existed only for a few hundred years, they reply that theirs is the genuine, ancient doctrine, but that it was only lost for a long time and has been restored by them. Now, there certainly cannot be twenty contradictory doctrines, and yet each at the same time be the genuine, ancient doctrine of the Saviour ; neither could the genuine doctrine have been lost, for Christ promised that his doctrine should endure for all time, and that he would give to his own the Spirit of truth, which would preserve them from error. Again we must ask, if the true doctrine was lost for a time, when and where was it again recovered, and who can tell us reliably by which one of these many contradictory sects the true doctrine of Christ was again found ? You see, Thomas, in this manner it is impossible to reach a satisfactory result, and yet the solution of the question is of the utmost importance, for the *genuine teachings of Christ alone can save us*.

Now, if we turn to the other side we find the Catholic Church, and she says : My bishops come down in unbroken succession from the apostles. Wherever there is an episcopal see, I can prove that the first bishop of this see was either one of the apostles or a disciple of an apostle, or at least con-

secrated for his office and commissioned by a legitimate successor of the apostles. Now, Christ gave to his apostles and their successors his doctrine as a deposit for safe-keeping for all time, and promised them the guidance of the Holy Ghost, that they might not, by mistake, lose anything from, or add anything to, the deposit entrusted to their care. The apostles and their successors have securely and safely guarded and preserved the unfalsified doctrine of Christ; and from his time down to the present hour it could not have been lost or corrupted for a single moment, for otherwise we would have to accuse Christ of having broken his word. Who would dare utter this blasphemy? Moreover, if the true doctrine of Christ was ever lost or falsified, then he would have allowed a time to be when Christian men, even with the best of will, could not have learned it. And yet Christ brought his heavenly truths down upon earth for no other purpose than *that men might be saved*.

The whole and genuine teachings of Christ *alone can save us*, and these we *find alone in the Catholic Church*. This we hold and believe. But for all this we do *not* believe that every one who belongs to the Catholic Church must necessarily be saved because he is a Catholic; it depends entirely upon whether he draws the proper benefit from these teachings and regulates his life accordingly. Neither do we believe that all those are condemned who are outside of the Catholic Church. Those who lived before Christ, and did the right according to their knowledge and conscience, could, even as pagans, be saved through Christ, though they did not know him. And thus it is to-day with all those who do not know Christ, or who are in error concerning his doctrines, provided culpable ignorance, indifference, or perversity of will be not the causes of their error. We know but one thing—namely, that nothing can save us but the teachings of Jesus Christ. But who shall be saved, and who shall be damned—to know this is the exclusive prerogative of

God, because he alone can judge whether any man is deprived of the knowledge of the unadulterated teachings of the Gospel through his own fault or not.

Thomas—Does the Catholic Church, then, not condemn those who believe doctrines in contradiction with her own ?

Pastor—The Church condemns the error, just as she condemns sin, and yet treats the sinner with compassion and seeks to save him.

Thomas—Yet the Catholic Church goes to so much pains to convert the heathen and those without her fold ; if these are in error from no fault of theirs, then their salvation is in no manner endangered.

Pastor—If you saw some one, from ignorance, committing a wrong, would you not correct him, although you might think that, in his ignorance, he has no moral responsibility ?

Thomas—Undoubtedly.

Pastor—And it would even be your duty to enlighten him. And just so it is the duty of the Catholic Church to instruct all men in the divine truths ; in doing this she only obeys the command of her founder, Jesus Christ : “ Go and teach all men,” and she must fulfil this commission as long as there are any left to whom the true word of God has not been announced.

Thomas—I comprehend : the Catholic Church must feel it her duty to do this, as much as every right-thinking man must feel it his duty to instruct the ignorant.

Simon—Is not the series of prayers to which you referred followed by the unveiling of the cross ?

Pastor—Yes. The prayers being concluded, the moment has arrived for entering into the full contemplation of the catastrophe of Calvary. The celebrant now goes to the Epistle side of the altar, and takes a crucifix covered with a black veil, and, disclosing a portion of its summit, he chants, “ *Ecce lignum crucis* ”—“ Behold the wood of the

cross"; some chanters continue, "*in quo pependit Salus mundi*"—"upon which the Salvation of the world did hang"; the choir answers, "*Venite, adoremus*"—"Come, let us adore," and all bend their knees. Then, ascending one or two steps of the altar, the celebrant uncovers the right arm, and, in somewhat of a higher strain, the same passages are sung and the same answer is repeated. Going to the middle of the platform in front of the altar, he shows the entire figure, and, in a still higher tone, repeats again: "*Ecce lignum crucis*," and the attendants and the choir answer as before. This uncovering of the crucifix is to represent to us the moment when upon Calvary was gradually lifted up the Victim of propitiation, by whose bruises we are healed. Now the celebrant descends and lays the cross upon the floor before the altar. Then he takes off his shoes, and, making three genuflections, he at length prostrates himself before the cross and reverently kisses the feet of the crucified Redeemer. The rest of the clergy, if there be any in the sanctuary, follow in their proper order to perform the same act of affectionate devotion. Formerly the clergy, as well as the laity, came with bare feet to the celebration of the offices of Good Friday, as a tribute of homage to Him who was for us stripped of every garment. The taking off of the shoes by the priest is a remnant of this ancient custom. The performance of this ceremony is called the *Adoration of the Cross*.

Thomas—How is that, your Reverence? Then the cross, or the figure of the Crucified, is really adored?

Pastor—Even this question on your part cannot surprise me. You have unfortunately imbibed those prejudices which have been a hundred times refuted, but which, nevertheless, are again and again repeated. Peter, John, come here; I have a question to ask you. (At these words of the priest two little boys, aged respectively eight and ten years, who had come to the meeting in company with their

parents, stepped forward.) Peter, tell me, do we adore the crucifixes ?

Peter—No, we only venerate them.

Pastor—But they are only made of wood or metal ; ought we to venerate wood and metal ?

Peter and John—We venerate not the metal, but the figure of Christ which is made of it.

Pastor—Still, in church and at home you kneel down before the crucifix when you wish to pray.

Peter—But I do not adore it.

John—I adore Christ.

Pastor—Very good ; but Christ is in heaven, and not in this figure. Why do you kneel down before this figure ?

Peter—In order the better to be reminded of Christ.

Pastor—Precisely. We are not angels, but men. Our souls, dwelling in houses of clay, are chiefly affected through the senses ; we need some sensible exhibition to make deep impression on the mind. We Catholics know very well that the crucifix is made of wood or metal, and far be it from us to show any adoration or veneration to the material crucifix. But it is precious and venerable for us, because it is an emblem of Him who died for us upon it. If some one were to kiss and press to his heart the portrait of his departed parent, would any one suspect him of showing such affection to the canvas or the colors of the picture ? Would not all be convinced that it was intended for the person of his deceased father ? I have been present at the unveiling of monuments and statues erected to great statesmen and military heroes amid grand civic and military pomp. I saw the statues crowned with laurels and decorated with wreaths of flowers ; thousands witnessed these scenes with me, and yet not one imagined for a moment that this honor was conferred upon the stone or bronze of which these statues were made. All naturally thought of the men whom these monuments represented. So, too, the veneration and affection

which we show towards the crucifix is shown to the Divine Redeemer, by it represented. Whilst kneeling at the foot of the cross, or lying prostrate before it, our minds are lifted up to that heaven which contains Him who bled upon it. And the words with which we give utterance to our ardent affection and gratitude are not: "I adore thee, O emblem of Christ!" but, "I adore thee, O Christ! of whom this crucifix is an emblem." We never think of adoring the figure, however much we may venerate it. Have you not all been taught thus from your infancy?

All—Precisely as you have said.

Pastor—Now, every Catholic the world over believes upon this point just as you do. And you too, Thomas, have not been taught differently in your youth; but it is to be regretted that you have so utterly forgotten those early lessons.

Now let us again return to the further consideration of the ceremonies of Good Friday. After having spoken of the veneration or adoration of the cross, I must speak in particular of the hymns sung during the performance of the same. They are called *Impropéria*, or reproaches, because in them the mercies of God to the Jewish people, and their return of base ingratitude in repaying the Saviour with so many ignominies, are enumerated. I will recite them to you in their entirety. They are as follows:

"My people, what have I done to thee? or in what have I grieved thee? Answer me.

"Because I brought thee out of the land of Egypt thou hast prepared a cross for thy Saviour.

"Because I led thee through the desert forty years, and fed thee with manna, and brought thee into an excellent land, thou hast prepared a cross for thy Saviour.

"What more should I have done to thee and have not done? I have planted thee for my most beautiful vineyard, and thou hast proved very bitter to me; for in my thirst

thou gavest me vinegar to drink, and with a spear thou hast pierced the side of thy Saviour.

“For thy sake I scourged Egypt with her first-born : and thou hast delivered me to be scourged.

“I brought thee out of Egypt, having drowned Pharaoh in the Red Sea : and thou hast delivered me over to the chief priests.

“I opened the sea before thee : and thou with a spear hast opened my side.

“I went before thee in a pillar of the cloud : and thou has brought me to the court of Pilate.

“I fed thee with manna in the desert : and thou hast beaten me with buffets and with scourges.

“I gave thee wholesome water to drink out of the rock : and thou hast given me gall and vinegar.

“For thy sake I struck the kings of the Chanaanites : and thou hast struck my head with a reed.

“I gave thee a royal sceptre : and thou hast given me a crown of thorns.

“I have exalted thee with great strength : and thou hast hanged me on the gibbet of the cross.

Such are the words of these hymns. Could the ingratitude of the Jewish people be more impressively and strikingly represented than by placing side by side the benefits they received and the return which they made him instead?

Simon—Truly, it is an awful thought that a people so blessed of God as were the Jews should in this manner have compensated him.

Pastor—But suppose we, all of us, were to count up the benefits which we have received at the hands of God during our lives, and were to place by their side the offences against him of which we have been guilty, would the result be any more favorable for us ? God has given us life—do we not abuse it to commit sin ? God has given us the members of our body—do we not abuse them to offend him ? God gives us food

and drink—do we not abuse them in sinful excesses? God has redeemed us upon the cross, has in his blood washed away our sins—and have we ceased to commit sin?

Simon—This is, alas! too true, and we have reason to bewail it.

Pastor—To remind us of this is the purpose of those hymns; not the Jews, but we ourselves, are reprov'd in them. How much greater are the graces and benefits which we have received from God in the new dispensation than those conferred upon the people of the ancient law! Not through the Red Sea did God bring us in order to save us from the power of Pharaoh, but by the sacrament of baptism he led us into his kingdom and freed us from the yoke of Satan. Not with the flesh of the ancient paschal lamb, but with his own flesh, with the bread of angels, has he fed us. Not to the terrestrial land of Chanaan but to the eternal country above has he called us. If, then, we prostrate ourselves before the cross, we are to place before our minds our manifold transgressions and our ingratitude, and compare with them what God has done for us, in order that a sincere contrition and an efficacious resolve of amendment may seize our souls. At the same time we should also gratefully and joyfully remember how the Saviour never wearies in showing us his mercy and goodness, and how from the cross he overwhelms us with spiritual blessings; and then we may join with our whole heart in the versicle which follows the Reproaches:

“ O faithful cross ! O noblest tree !
 In all our woods there's none like thee ;
 No earthly groves, no shady bowers
 Produce such leaves, such fruit, such flowers.
 Sweet are the nails and sweet the wood
 That bears a weight so sweet and good.”

The Reproaches are interspersed with the *Trisagion*, which is sung in Latin and in Greek : “ Holy God, Holy and Strong

God, Holy and Immortal God, have mercy on us !” What the Jews in their blindness and obduracy would not acknowledge, the Christian world on this day gratefully confesses in glorification of her Saviour. In the midst of his deepest degradation she adores him as her God, extols the strength and power of his divinity, and praises his immortality and eternity.

Simon—How truly beautiful and full of meaning are these rites !

Pastor—They are indeed an inestimable treasure from which we may derive instruction and edification. For this reason we must spare no pains to acquire a right understanding of these beautiful ceremonies, in order that when we see them performed they may the more console and comfort our hearts, and be efficacious means of leading us to heaven. The beautiful hymns on the Passion of Christ which are sung on this day, and in general throughout the Passion time, now merit our attention. If I were to read them for you, you would scarcely retain much of them ; I have therefore made provision that each one may read them himself—often re-read them—and reflect upon their context.

Then the pastor distributed quite a number of sheets upon which the following hymns were printed :

PANGE LINGUA GLORIOSI.

Sing, my tongue, the Saviour's glory ;

Tell his triumph far and wide ;

Tell aloud the famous story

Of his body crucified ;

How, upon the cross a victim,

Vanquishing in death, he died.

Eating of the tree forbidden,

Man had sunk in Satan's snare,

When our pitying Creator

Did this second tree prepare,

Destined, many ages later,

That first evil to repair.

Such the order God appointed
 When for sin he would atone,
 To the serpent thus opposing
 Schemes yet deeper than his own ;
 Thence the remedy procuring
 Whence the fatal wound had come.

So, when now at length the fulness
 Of the sacred time drew nigh,
 Then the Son, the world's Creator,
 Left his Father's throne on high,
 From a Virgin's womb appearing,
 Clothed in our mortality.

All within a lowly manger,
 Lo ! a tender babe he lies.
 See his gentle Virgin-Mother
 Lull to sleep his infant cries,
 While the limbs of God incarnate
 Round with swathing-bands she ties.

Blessing, honor everlasting
 To the immortal Deity ;
 To the Father, Son, and Spirit
 Equal praises ever be ;
 Glory through the earth and heaven
 To Trinity in Unity. *Amen.*

VEXILLA REGIS.

Forth comes the standard of the King.
 All hail, thou mystery adored !
 Hail, Cross! on which the Life himself
 Died, and by death our life restored;

On which our Saviour's holy side,
 Rent open with a cruel spear,
 Of blood and water poured a stream
 To wash us from defilement clear.

O sacred wood! in thee fulfilled
Was holy David's truthful lay,
Which told the world that from a tree
The Lord should all the nations sway.

Most royally empurpled o'er,
How beautifully thy stem doth shine!
How glorious was its lot to touch
Those limbs so holy and divine!

Thrice blest! upon whose arms outstretched
The Saviour of the world reclined;
Balance sublime! upon whose beam
Was weighed the Ransom of mankind.

Hail, Cross! thou only hope of man,
Hail on this holy Passion day!
To saints increase the grace they have,
From sinners purge their guilt away.

Salvation's spring, blest Trinity,
Be praise to thee through earth and skies:
Thou through the cross the victory
Dost give; oh! also give the prize. *Amen.*

The pastor then continued :

Pastor—Now, at length, we have arrived at those ceremonies that on Good Friday take the place of Mass.

Simon—You will kindly permit me to repeat my question of the previous evening—viz., why on this day is the Holy Sacrifice not offered?

Pastor—It has always been the custom of the Church to abstain from celebrating Mass on Good Friday, from the fact that it is the great mourning day of the year, and the Mass proper has always been regarded as a joyful and a consolatory act; hence it is omitted on this day of profoundest sorrow, when even Nature mourned the death of her Author. Another reason is that it is not becoming to represent the Passion of Christ mystically by the consecration

of the Eucharist whilst the Church is celebrating it as if really taking place.

Simon—Why, then, is the service of this day called “Mass of the Presanctified”?

Pastor—The essence of the Mass consists in the consecration or changing of bread and wine into the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. This consecration does not take place on Good Friday. But in order to show forth in some manner the death of the Lord on the great anniversary of his atonement, the Host which was consecrated on the previous day, and which had been placed in the repository for the adoration of the faithful on Holy Thursday, is now brought back to the altar and there consumed. The circumstance of this Host having been consecrated previously, or presanctified, gives the name of “Mass of the Presanctified” to this ceremony. What takes place to-day is therefore only a certain mournful ceremony at which some of the usual prayers and rites of the Mass are retained. After receiving Communion the priest almost-abruptly leaves the altar. This may remind us of the sudden departure of the Israelites after eating the paschal lamb.

This, then, my dear friends, is the manner in which, according to the ordinance of the Church, we celebrate the mournful anniversary of the death of the Saviour. Is there anything else in connection with the celebration of this day which I have overlooked, and upon which you desire to be informed?

After a brief silence Simon replied: We have only cordially to thank you for your great kindness in so minutely explaining the ceremonies of this day.

Pastor—Well, then, let us proceed to consider the ceremonies of Holy Saturday. Of this day we can speak more cheerfully, for its ceremonies breathe joy and consolation. At first all is still, silent in the church; but as soon as the morning’s service begins we behold a series of types or

figures which remind us of the resurrection of the Lord. Our attention is first drawn to the blessing of the new fire.

Simon—Why is the fire blessed?

Pastor—I will explain to you the whole ceremony, together with its signification. The missal prescribes that this new fire be struck from a flint; the flint signifies Christ, the spiritual rock, according to the words of St. Paul (1 Cor. x. 4). From this fire the lamps and lights of the church are then lighted, to exhibit the progress through the world of that fire which he came to cast upon the earth (Matt. xii. 49), and to indicate that from him alone we may hope for light and warmth for our souls. The fire is blessed because it is the custom of the Church to sanctify every object employed in her holy service by the word of God and prayer; but the blessing of this fire also reminds us that no unholy fire is to burn in our breasts, but that, being called to the service of God, our hearts should ever burn with the fire of divine love.

Simon—Then even this fire can teach us a salutary lesson. What is the meaning of the triple candle?

Pastor—The threefold candle signifies the Holy Trinity—one in nature, but threefold in person—of whom the Second Person came into the world as the light from heaven. “He was the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world” (John i. 9). Hence the priest, in lighting this candle, thrice sings: “Lumen Christi”—the light of Christ—and the attendants, kneeling down, answer: “Deo gratias”—Thanks be to God—to give thanks to the Eternal for having sent his only-begotten Son into the world to enlighten us.

Simon—And the paschal candle?

Pastor—The paschal candle represents Christ. Mystic writers have likened it, when not yet lighted, to the cloud, but when lighted to the pillar of fire, that guided the Hebrew people in the desert on their journey to the

promised land. Christ is the true leader of the Christian host through this land of pilgrimage to that country promised by the Lord to his faithful followers. In the beginning of the service this candle exhibits Christ as still extinguished in the tomb, but it will speedily show him forth as returned to life, enlightening all with the true knowledge of God. In the candle there are five openings, in which five nails of wax, containing five grains of incense, are put. These five openings represent the five principal wounds of the Redeemer, which he retains even after his resurrection, and which on the great day of judgment we shall behold in him, either for our great comfort or our great consternation. The five grains of incense recall the embalming of the body of the Saviour by Nicodemus and Joseph. During the singing of the beautiful canticle "Exultet" the paschal candle is lighted from the triple candle, to indicate that the Son proceeded from the Father, as we sing in the "Credo" at Mass, "God of God, Light of Light"; later on the lamps and other lights of the church are likewise lighted from this triple candle, to show that all enlightenment has its source in God, the "Father of Lights" (James i. 17), through Jesus Christ our Lord, and is poured out upon all men through the grace of the Holy Ghost. After the blessing of the fonts the paschal candle is placed at the Gospel side of the altar, where it burns at the principal public offices until the festival of the Ascension, to show how Christ remained conversing with his apostles and disciples. In this connection I will allude to another custom. Formerly, at the end of the paschal time, the remnant of the paschal candle was divided into small pieces, into which the figure of a paschal lamb was pressed—an emblem of the Saviour; these were then called *Agnus Dei*—Lamb of God. At present the Holy Father blesses, on Holy Saturday, wax expressly intended for this purpose, and of which the *Agnus Dei* are made. You at once see that these also are to serve as a remembrance of the Redeemer.

Simon—Now, I presume, the blessing of the fonts, or baptismal water, follows ?

Pastor—Before that the prophecies are read. This is done to show that the types and prophecies foretold of Christ from the beginning of the world, have now been fulfilled in him, and that everything that was shown to the ancient world in a cloud, as it were, is now presented in the effulgence of light. The prophecies announce, at the same time, figuratively the sad lot of the sinner before the coming of the Saviour, and the great happiness of belonging to him through the grace of baptism. This part of the prophecies had reference to the neophytes, who formerly received holy baptism on this day. These lessons from Holy Scripture are twelve in number, and only when all have been read is the baptismal water blessed.

Thomas—It seems to me that the blessing of this water is unnecessary. Is not natural, unblessed water just as good ?

Pastor—Blessed water is not *necessary* for the validity of baptism. But the Church of God has directed the blessing of this water, in order that this sacrament might be administered and received with the greater reverence and devotion. St. Basil, in the fourth century, counts this blessing among the apostolic institutions, and many Fathers of the early centuries speak of it as of most ancient usage.

Simon—As far as I can remember, there are also peculiar ceremonies at the blessing of the baptismal water.

Pastor—The priest goes to the font while the choir sings the tract: “As the hart panteth after the fountain of waters, so my soul panteth after thee, O God ! My soul hath thirsted after the living God ; when shall I come and appear before the face of God ?” This indicates the ardent desire with which we should strive after the grace of God, and what a precious gift the Redeemer has given us in the Sacrament of Baptism, and what great care we should take to apply to the children, as soon as possible after birth, this price-

less gift of Christ. In the course of the prayers which are now said the priest blesses the water with the sign of the holy cross, and divides the water in the form of a cross, in order again to point to the death of the Redeemer upon the cross as the source of baptismal grace ; he touches the water with the palm of the hand to show that, as at the creation the Holy Spirit hovered over the waters, so will he hover with his divine grace over those who receive holy baptism, and fill them with his light and strength. The priest also divides the water with his hand, and throws some of it out towards the four parts of the globe, thereby indicating that all the parts of the world are to receive the grace of baptism, according to the words of Christ : “ Go, therefore, and teach all nations, and baptize them.” As from the fountain of Paradise four rivers watered the whole earth, so the whole earth is to be overflowed with the waters of baptism unto the cleansing from original sin. The priest next breathes upon the water as a sign that by baptism the spiritual life of the soul is given to man, just as, by breathing upon the first man, the Creator endowed him with a soul and life ; and also that the grace of the Holy Ghost is to be imparted to him, just as the apostles received the Holy Ghost when Christ breathed upon them. The celebrant next sinks the paschal candle three different times into the water, saying each time : “ May the virtue of the Holy Ghost descend into all the water of this font, and make the whole substance of this water fruitful and capable of regenerating.” After withdrawing the candle from the water he continues : “ Here may the stains of all sins be washed out ; here may human nature . . . be cleansed from all the filth of the old man, that all who receive this sacrament of regeneration may be born again new children of true innocence, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Now the people are sprinkled with blessed water, some of which is reserved to be distributed to the faithful for use in their houses, and by them it is gene-

rally called Easter water. Into the water in the baptismal font some oil of catechumens and some chrism are poured in the form of a cross, thus once more indicating the plenitude of the Holy Ghost infused into the soul of the neophyte in the holy Sacrament of Baptism. During the sprinkling with the water, alluded to above, we would do well to recall to mind our own baptism, and to renew and strengthen the earnest purpose never to violate the promises we made in baptism by the mouth of our sponsors.

Simon—After the blessing of the water the Litany of the Saints is sung, is it not?

Pastor—The Church does this on all important occasions—for instance, the ordination of priests and consecration of bishops. Formerly those who had been prepared for holy baptism received this sacrament immediately after the blessing of the fonts. When so important an act as the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism is to be performed, we no longer content ourselves with our own prayers, but we have recourse to our beatified brethren of the Church triumphant, that they may unite their prayers with ours, and that we may therefore the more confidently hope for a favorable hearing of our supplications. We fortify ourselves, as it were, with the prayers and the help of the saints of God to obtain the grace of holy baptism for all men without exception, but we pray particularly for the neophytes, or newly baptized. During the chanting of the Litany the priest lies prostrate at the foot of the altar, with his face to the earth, thus to express the fervor and devotion with which the faithful, in union with the saints, pray to God.

Simon—You have remarked several times that formerly baptism was administered on this day. Was this done only on Holy Saturday, and why?

Pastor—In the early times of Christianity baptism was conferred chiefly on Holy Saturday, but not exclusively. Saturday before Pentecost was another day appointed for its

administration; hence the custom of blessing the fonts on these two days. The reason why the preference was given to Holy Saturday for conferring this sacrament is, firstly, because in Holy Week our redemption was wrought through Jesus Christ, and, secondly, because during Lent occasion and opportunity was found, by prayer and penitential acts, to prepare for this holy rite. Finally, baptism, which in the beginning was administered by immersion or plunging into the water, is also a symbol of the burial of Christ, and the rising out of the water is a figure of the resurrection of Christ, according to the words of St. Paul (Rom. vi. 4): "For we are buried together with him by baptism unto death: that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life." Pentecost was also chosen for conferring this sacrament, because this festival was regarded as the conclusion of the paschal time, the Holy Ghost coming down on this day upon the apostles, baptizing them with fire and enkindling in them the light of living faith; and also because, after the descent of the Holy Ghost and the first sermon of the Prince of the Apostles, over three thousand persons were baptized. Hence it is customary in some places to bring the children born about these times for baptism immediately after the blessing of the baptismal water; and even now the ancient prayer for the neophytes is still retained at Holy Mass during the octave of Easter and Pentecost. This prayer is as follows: "We therefore beseech thee, O Lord! graciously to accept this oblation of our servitude, which is also that of thy whole family, and which we offer to thee for these also, whom thou hast been pleased to regenerate by water and the Holy Ghost."

Simon—Were these, then, the two only days on which formerly baptism was given?

Pastor—At least in the very beginning of Christianity afterwards other days, such as Christmas, the Feast of St.

John the Baptist, and Epiphany, were added. Of course these days were set apart only for adults in good health, because in those days chiefly adults, converts from Judaism and paganism, presented themselves for baptism. But for the sick and for children no particular feast was appointed, the Church being most solicitous that no one should die without the grace of this holy sacrament. Those parents, therefore, commit a grievous sin who unreasonably defer to have their children baptized, since in the first days after its birth the life of the child is exposed to so many dangers.

We have now explained all the ceremonies of Holy Saturday that precede the Mass.

Simon—The Mass of Holy Saturday is again more joyful. The altars already have a more cheerful and a brighter appearance.

Pastor—It is not without a meaning that the altars are again decorated. In the Mass of this morning, which was said formerly during Easter night, the resurrection of the Lord is celebrated, and the ornaments of the altar are a sign of the spiritual joy and exultation which fill our breasts at this joyful event.

Simon—At this Mass the bells are also again rung.

Pastor—I have already told you that the bells represent the apostles, whose words were to announce the praise of the Lord unto the ends of the earth. These had, during the Passion of their Master, concealed themselves and were silent from fear of the Jews. By the resurrection and apparition of the Saviour the apostles were filled with new life and courage and comfort, and they heralded the news of the resurrection of their Lord. Therefore the sound of the bells—their types—is again heard. Besides, the ringing of the bells is also a sign of our joy at the resurrection of the Lord, as their silence was a mark of our sorrow at his death.

Simon—And the “Gloria” is again intoned by the celebrant ?

Pastor—Yes ; this is another indication of our joy. However, there are other reasons for singing the “Gloria” to-day. In the first place, the resurrection of Christ from the dead seems like a new birth to life. As the angels sang this joyous hymn at the birth of Christ from the womb of his Virgin Mother, in like manner is this hymn of joy most appropriate at his second birth from the womb of the earth—namely, his victorious resurrection. Secondly, as at the crib of Bethlehem angels announced peace to men of good-will, so also the singing of the “Gloria” on Holy Saturday formerly announced to the neophytes peace with God through sanctifying grace which they had received.

Simon—I believe there are several points in which the Mass of this day differs from that of other days, but I cannot remember them very distinctly.

Pastor—I will tell you everything peculiar to the Mass of Holy Saturday. 1. The initiatory prayer, called the Introit, which the priest says immediately after ascending the altar at the Epistle side, is omitted. In former times an entire psalm was sung before the beginning of Mass, to give the faithful time to assemble during the chanting of it; but since on Holy Saturday the entire congregation was already present, having attended the blessing of the water, Mass could begin at once. Instead of the entire psalm which it was customary formerly to sing, only one or two verses or a portion of the Holy Scripture is now said ; but on Holy Saturday the custom of omitting the usual psalm has been retained. 2. At the solemn Mass of this day no candles are carried by the acolytes whilst the deacon sings the Gospel, as is done at other times. This is to express that the joy of the Church will not be complete until Easter Sunday, when Christ for the first time showed himself to his apostles. Thus Mary Magdalene continued in anxiety and sadness till she beheld with her own eyes her Divine Master, notwithstanding that the apparition of the angel and his consoling

words awakened joy in her heart. 3. Many prayers which are usually said at Mass are omitted to-day. In this we follow a usage introduced in the first centuries. The office of Holy Saturday, which is now held in the forenoon, then commenced at three o'clock in the afternoon, and did not terminate till after midnight. In order not to protract it too long many of the prayers at Mass were omitted.

Simon—Is it possible! Was the fervor of the Christians of those days so great that the people would remain at divine service from three o'clock in the afternoon till after midnight?

Pastor—Thus it was, although to us lukewarm Christians it may seem impossible. As early as nine o'clock in the morning the catechumens, or neophytes, assembled in the church, and the last examination was held as to their proficiency in the Christian doctrine. They were then successively signed with the sign of the cross by the priest upon the forehead, the prescribed exorcisms and prayers were said over them, and they received the imposition of the hands. After this all made the profession of faith, and, after several other prayers were said, they were at length dismissed by the archdeacon who presided over them, to assemble again at three o'clock. At the appointed hour the faithful assembled in church. The bishop, accompanied by priests and other ministers, then began the holy function. First the fire was blessed, then the paschal candle; after this several chapters from the Sacred Scriptures pertaining to the instruction of the neophytes were read, interspersed with prayers. Finally the baptismal water was blessed and the litanies sung, and then baptism was conferred upon the catechumens—and sometimes their class was very large. Baptism was immediately followed by confirmation. After all these lengthy functions solemn Mass was celebrated by the bishop, during which he also administered the Sacrament of Holy Orders. You can easily understand how these numerous and lengthy

functions could extend beyond midnight. St. Jerome says expressly that it is an observance coming down from the apostles, on the eve of Easter not to dismiss the people from church before midnight.

On this account care had to be taken to shorten the Mass, which began at so late an hour, wherever it was possible. It was necessary to husband the strength of the people, who were much exhausted by the long service, and afford them some time for rest, since early in the morning they were again to assemble in the church for Matins. This abbreviation could be done more easily because several of the prayers usually said at Mass were already contained in the ceremonies which had gone before. Thus the "Credo" was omitted, because it had been recited before when the neophytes made their profession of faith; so also the "Agnus Dei," this having concluded the litany. Formerly, at the Offertory, a psalm was sung while the faithful went to the altar to make their offerings; so, likewise, at the Communion while the people presented themselves at the altar to receive Holy Communion. At present only short passages are said instead of these psalms; even these are omitted in the Mass of Holy Saturday. Instead of reciting the usual prayers after Communion, Vespers were immediately sung, consisting of a short thanksgiving for the graces conferred by God upon the neophytes. This we observe even to-day; we sing the short psalm (116), "Laudate Dominum, omnes gentes"—"Praise the Lord, all ye nations"—and the Canticle of the Blessed Virgin, "Magnificat."

Now, my dear friends, we have come to the end of the ceremonies of Holy Saturday, and likewise to the end of Holy Week, and we have shared the experience of the Christians of ancient times: the explanation of this day has brought us, if not to midnight, at least to a very late hour.

Simon—And yet we are ready to listen to you still longer.

Pastor—It is indeed laudable that in this respect you re-

semble our Christian ancestors, who did not permit themselves to be deterred by fatigue from attending these holy ceremonies. Strive now, likewise, to resemble them in this : that you do not only listen with pleasure to the explanation of these rites, but that you will yourselves devoutly assist at the service of those days.

Simon—We will all do this now the more readily since we have become acquainted with the signification of everything that takes place in the church on those days.

Pastor—Make use, then, of this knowledge, in order to appear in the temple of God not only with pleasure, but also with fervent devotion and pious mindfulness of the work of redemption which was performed on these days. May God bless and protect you this night! Be you also buried with Christ in your sleep, that your waking may each time be a resurrection with the Saviour to a new life. Every day will then bring to you a new Alleluia, until one day you shall sing it in the abode of the blessed.

CHAPTER V.

From Easter to the Feast of the Ascension.

PASTOR—This evening we celebrate, if not according to the season, at least in our conference, the Feast of Easter. I may, therefore, wish you all a joyful Easter festival.

Simon—Thank you, Reverend Father, and permit us to return your kind wishes. But whence comes it that on the day of Easter we wish each other a happy Easter festival, or a joyful Alleluia ?

Pastor—It is customary among men to congratulate or wish each other joy upon the occurrence of some happy or joyful event ; now, there can be no more happy or joyful event for us than the accomplishment of our redemption and the triumphant resurrection of our Lord from the tomb, in which his enemies had thought to confine him by guards and seals. Hence in Rome, at the Mass on Holy Saturday, when after the epistle the first Alleluia is intoned, the subdeacon goes to the throne of the Holy Father and thus addresses him : “ Holy Father, I announce to you great joy—that is, Alleluia.” The custom of saluting each other in this manner is pretty general in the Catholic world ; nor is it confined exclusively to the feast of Easter, but is extended also to other festivals—for instance, Christmas. The resurrection of Christ is, moreover, a pledge that we, too, shall one day arise from the grave ; and this is a subject of great congratulation. Furthermore, we wish, at least implicitly, that we may all celebrate this festival with true, heartfelt joy, and

we shall do this if we praise God for the mercies which he has shown us ; if we render ourselves worthy of the graces of Him who has gone forth from the grave, and lead such lives that not fear but joy will fill our breasts at the thought of our future resurrection. Like Christmas, Easter is also distinguished by the presents which on this day the faithful give to each other.

Joseph—Oh ! yes, the Easter eggs.

Pastor—The egg is a symbol of the Resurrection. The outer shell resembles the covering of the vault, which the Saviour had to remove, as the little bird in the egg has to break through the shell in order to come forth.

Simon—I did not think that even the Easter egg had a Christian signification. I always deemed the exchange of painted or ornamented eggs on this day an ancient custom without special meaning.

Pastor—Yet they have a Christian signification. For many centuries they were blessed in the church before they were given as presents. And, moreover, such an egg, small and insignificant as it is, can be for us an excellent preacher. For though we are unable to see the egg, but only the outer shell, we yet have the conviction that a living being can come from it. Why, then, should those truths which God has revealed to us, and which we cannot fully comprehend by means of the eyes of our reason, present greater obstacles to our belief ? Would you not marvel at one who would refuse to believe that a living bird could come from an egg, because upon opening a fresh egg he can find none ?

Simon—Undoubtedly.

Pastor—And just such a one he would resemble who would refuse, for instance, to believe that Christ has risen from the dead, or that we shall one day rise again with our bodies, because on inspecting a grave he finds but a corpse or only dust and ashes.

Simon—Truly, it is not otherwise. But, dear Pastor, we

have here spoken of the Easter presents, and do not even know whence the name of Easter is derived.

Pastor—The name Easter is Anglo-Saxon, and is probably derived from the Old-German of *ostarun*, now *ostern*, being the name of a festival celebrated among the pagan Teutons in honor of the goddess of light. This feast was celebrated in spring, and as the Christian feast commemorative of the resurrection of the Lord falls in this season, the name of Ostern—or, Anglo-Saxon, Easter—was transferred to this feast. In the language of the Church, however, the feast is called *Pascha*—derived from the Hebrew *Pessach*, meaning the Passover. On this day the Hebrews celebrated the commemoration of the miraculous passage of the people of Israel through the Red Sea into the promised land, and their liberation from the slavery of Pharaoh; and they also commemorated the passage of the angel of the Lord, who slew the first-born of the Egyptians, whilst he passed over the houses of the Israelites, whose door-posts were sprinkled with the blood of the paschal lamb. Now, for us too a passover has taken place, of which that of the ancient law was but a figure. Christ, our Lord and Saviour, by the shedding of his precious blood, has redeemed us from our sins, and, as it were, led us through his blood forth from the captivity and slavery of Satan. And if, during the paschal time, we have sanctified ourselves by the grace of the holy sacraments, and have become reconciled with God, then our souls have been in a spiritual manner sprinkled with the blood of the Divine Lamb, so that the prince of darkness has no more power over us.

Simon—Other festivals—like Christmas, for example—are always celebrated on the same day of the month. How is it that Easter is celebrated sometimes earlier and sometimes later?

Pastor—The festival of Easter is regulated by the course of the moon. Easter day is always the first Sunday after

the full moon which happens upon or next after the 21st of March, or the vernal equinox. If the full moon happens on a Sunday, Easter day is the Sunday after. By this arrangement Easter may come as early as the 22d of March or as late as the 25th of April. It is always celebrated on a Sunday, because on this day of the week the Saviour actually arose from the dead. As God completed his work of the creation on the sixth day with the creation of man, so he likewise completed the second creation—the redemption of man—by his death on the sixth day of the week, or Friday; and as God, after the creation, rested upon the seventh day, so also the Saviour, after completing the work of the redemption, rested upon the Sabbath in the tomb. But on Sunday, the first day of the week, after having rested in the grave from Friday evening till the morning of the third day, he went forth from the same with new glory and splendor. Other feasts of the year, which are called “movable feasts,” are regulated according to Easter, so that, for instance, the Feast of the Ascension is always the fortieth, and Pentecost the fiftieth, day after Easter.

Simon—Why is the word “alleluia” so often repeated during the Easter time?

Pastor—Alleluia is a Hebrew word which occurs often in the Psalms, and means “praise the Lord” or “praise be to God.” By the frequent repetition of this word we are to be reminded that during this time we should give unceasing praise and thanks to our Saviour for the grace of his resurrection. St. Augustine assigns still another most beautiful reason why in the course of the fifty days from Easter to Pentecost, which comprise the paschal time, we should so often sing the Alleluia. He says (serm. 6, De Divers.): “The paschal time represents the eternal, happy life of heaven, where, in union with the blessed, we shall unceasingly sing the praises of God; whilst the time which precedes the festival of Easter—the mournful time of Lent—represents

our earthly life, painful and perishable, during which we have to contend against our evil passions, deplore our manifold transgressions, and sigh after our true, our heavenly country." In this earthly life we hope for the future beatific vision of God, which we cannot enjoy here below. Hence the Alleluia, says this holy Father, is suited to the paschal time, but not to the sorrowful time of Lent. The Alleluia is also used throughout the year, though not with so many repetitions, especially on Sundays, because the Sunday always reminds us of the resurrection of the Lord.

Simon—Why is the "Vidi aquam" sung on the Sundays of the paschal time, instead of the "Asperges me," at the sprinkling with holy water before Mass?

Pastor—The anthem "Asperges me" is a passage from the well-known penitential psalm "Miserere," and is rendered thus: "Sprinkle me, O Lord! with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow." This is followed by the words: "Have mercy upon me, O God! according to thy great mercy: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." In this prayer we implore of God to cleanse us of our sins and to show unto us his mercy. During the Easter time, however, the words used at the distribution of the holy water are borrowed from the prophet Ezechiel (chap. xlvii.) and the 117th Psalm: "I saw water flow from the right side of the temple, and all to whom this water came were saved, and shall sing Alleluia! [that is, Praise the Lord!]. Praise ye the Lord, for he is good, and his mercies endure for ever. Glory be to the Father, etc." This anthem is to remind us of the water of holy baptism, by which we were cleansed from our sins, and we praise God for the grace of baptism conferred upon us. And then it is but a short time since we solemnly commemorated the death of Christ, when we were reminded of that stream of water and blood that flowed from his sacred side, and which so beautifully typifies the sacraments of Baptism

and the Holy Eucharist. Furthermore, our Easter confession and Communion has taken place during these days, in which, let us hope, we were made clean and sanctified; hence we do not beg of God to cleanse us of our sins, but we rather thank him in this anthem for having purified us.

Simon—I presume nothing now remains to be explained concerning the Feast of Easter.

Pastor—There are still a few more peculiarities which are, no doubt, unknown to you, or which may have escaped your notice. I will briefly allude to them:

1. The festival of Easter, as, indeed, the other chief feasts, is celebrated in the Church for an entire week; this extended celebration is called the “octave,” and such a feast is said to have an “octave.” The object of this prolonged celebration is to afford us occasion more frequently and attentively to consider the divine mystery which is being solemnized.

2. During this time we recite, instead of the “*Angelus Domini*,” the “*Regina Cœli*,” and this is said standing, thus indicating, even by the posture of our body, that Christ has arisen from the grave. This custom also reminds us that now, having been cleansed from our sins by the grace of the sacraments, we should carefully avoid the occasions and dangers of relapsing into sin, being mindful of the words of the apostle (1 Cor. x. 12): “Let him that thinketh himself to stand, take heed lest he fall.” It behooves us, therefore, in these days especially, to turn away our minds from sinful and earthly things, and elevate them to heavenly desires. The same apostle admonishes us (Coloss. iii. 1): “If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God; . . . and not the things that are on the earth.” Elevate your hearts and minds to God, and remember that you are created, not for this world, but for heaven and eternity.

Simon—I have heard the first Sunday after Easter called

“*Dominica in albis.*” Why is this Sunday so called, and what is the meaning of the term?

Pastor—“*Dominica in albis*” literally means “Sunday in white.” The neophytes who were baptized on Holy Saturday were clothed in white garments, which they wore until the following Sunday, when they again appeared in church in their white robes, and there exchanged them for garments of other colors. Hence this day was called “Sunday in white.” A remnant of this custom is observed even at present in the baptism of infants. The priest, after anointing the head of the child with chrism, places upon it a white cloth or veil, saying: “Receive this white robe, and bring it unspotted to the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou mayest have eternal life.”

Simon—During the Easter time there also occur the Rogation days. What is the meaning of the processions held on these days?

Pastor—The Rogation days are observed on the three days immediately before Ascension day. They are days of special supplication, and are of great antiquity. In the year 469 the city and surroundings of Vienne, in France, were visited by earthquakes, conflagrations, failure of crops, and other calamities. St. Mamertus, Bishop of Vienne, thereupon ordered the three days before Ascension day to be observed as days of prayer and fasting, and that processions should be held on them, in order, by these and other penitential acts, to avert the chastisements of God and implore his mercy. This example was afterwards followed by the other bishops of France, and as early as 511 a national council, held in Orléans, recommended the general observance of these Rogation days. At present it is specially the blessing of God upon the labors of the husbandman that we would implore by means of these processions and supplications. And as these days happen to occur in the spring, that season so important and decisive for the subsequent harvest of autumn,

they are specially suited to this religious exercise. And then the proximity of the Feast of the Ascension also particularly invites us to prayer. For this festival recalls to our minds the fact that our Saviour has returned to heaven, to be our mediator and intercessor with the Father, and that, therefore, we may look with unfaltering confidence for the granting of our prayers. Hence the custom of observing these three days as days of special supplication gradually spread over the entire Church.

Thomas—But what connection is there between a public procession and penance, and the granting of our prayers? Surely no one can seriously believe that God will consider favorably any petition because of such a procession?

Pastor—Thomas, let me tell you something with which you will certainly agree. We naturally feel more sympathy with a sick man when we stand at the side of his couch of suffering, and are witnesses of his pains, than if they are only narrated to us; if we deeply feel the loss of some departed friend, we are impelled to visit his grave, there to give vent to our feelings; and in joy and sorrow we love to resort to those places which have a special connection with our feelings, or awaken in us special recollections. There we can best give up ourselves to our sentiments and impressions. Is not this the case?

Thomas—Undoubtedly.

Pastor—Now see, that is the manner in which we act when we desire to obtain a favor from God; we prefer to pray where we can pray best and most earnestly. If it is a public visitation for the cessation of which we pray, we go out into the public thoroughfares, where on every side we behold evidences of this particular calamity; if we would pray for deceased friends, we leave the church and repair to their burial-place; if we would ask a blessing for our crops, we pass through the fields, being reminded thereby of how much we stand in need of divine help, but at the same time

we also strengthen our confidence on beholding all that God, in his goodness, has until now bestowed upon us. Processions are, moreover, a most impressive emblem of our life upon earth ; they strikingly tell us that we are but strangers upon this earth, not having here a permanent place of abode, and that in this earthly pilgrimage our way to heaven must lead us through rugged and thorny paths. If, therefore, we pray for worldly goods—for instance, for the prosperity of our crops—it will be doubly advantageous if, while praying, we are reminded of the vanity and perishableness of all earthly things, that we may not lose sight of the kingdom of God in our solicitude for our temporal needs.

Thomas—Yes, this is all very true and very pretty ; but what of the many abuses that creep into these public exercises ?

Pastor—My dear Thomas, if you would abolish everything that has already been abused, in order to do away with the abuse, you could no longer even eat a piece of bread or drink a glass of wine ; you could no longer have recourse to the tribunal of penance or approach the Holy Eucharist. No reasonable person would justify or defend the abuse of anything, least of all if such abuse takes place with sacred things ; and neither would any one on that account do away with the thing itself. The bishops of the Church have at all times taken the utmost care to remove every disorder which had crept in, or was likely to creep in, by earnest admonitions, and, if necessary, by stringent laws. If a usage or ceremony was not too important, or if the abuse at its observance was over-prominent and general, then not unfrequently a ceremony, though laudable in itself, was entirely abolished in order to prevent the scandal ; thus, even the apostles would no longer tolerate the holding of a social feast, called love-feast, in connection with the celebration of the Lord's Supper, although this custom was sanctioned by the example of Christ himself. If the Catholic Church

wished to prevent every possible or actual abuse of sacred things, she would have to close every temple and forbid the outward manifestation of every religious sentiment. In saying this I take for granted, however, that we are now speaking of real and not imaginary abuses, and would add, at the same time, that very frequently rites and customs are called abuses which by no means deserve this name.

Thomas—I will admit that at the processions on Rogation days the abuses are not so frequent and glaring as at larger ones, called *pilgrimages*, yet they do also occur at the former.

Pastor—Well, suppose you were to mention the occurrences which you look upon as abuses.

Thomas—As such I consider the circumstance that these processions go from one place or village to another, where many only seek an occasion to eat and drink.

Pastor—The going from one place to another is done, undoubtedly, for the same reason that we unite in a procession in general. We direct our prayers unitedly to God, in order that by this union our prayers may acquire greater strength, and that thus we may the more easily obtain our request. In the same manner as the individual members of one parish come together for the purpose of common or united prayer, so, in the country, the entire congregation goes in a body to the neighboring village or parish, to invite its members to join them in their supplications. At the same time these different communities make public profession of their faith, and show to each other that, through their union in prayer, they acknowledge themselves as belonging to the Catholic Church. This religious act being once over, food and drink is taken, for the simple but excellent reason that these good people have bodies as well as souls, and are hungry after their journey. In this they do nothing more than Christ himself did with his friends at Cana, or those thousands whom he fed with the miraculously-multiplied bread. If on these occasions pilgrims coming from a distance are

entertained by the inhabitants of the village which has been visited, they thereby only comply in a laudable manner with the admonition of St. Paul that Christians should ever show hospitality (Rom. xii. 13). Thus far, then, we have discovered no traces of abuses. It is certainly a matter to be regretted and deplored if on such occasions individuals, or even numbers, so far forget themselves as by intemperance and excess to commit sin, and thus desecrate a religious act begun from holy motives. If the delinquents be but few, their misconduct certainly merits severe censure ; but you would scarcely be willing on their account to deny to the far greater number this act of religious devotion. Should, however, the instances of disorder be considerable, and the efforts to correct them prove futile, then more stringent measures must be employed to remedy the evil, and the chief pastors of the Church have, indeed, found themselves compelled in such instances to suppress, to the discredit of their subjects, the visits to other places in procession.

Thomas—For that reason pilgrimages ought, first of all, to be forbidden.

Pastor—If it should become absolutely necessary for the reasons mentioned above, certainly. But this would have to be proved. For those who rail blindly at this kind of religious exercise, and who have never in person taken part in a pilgrimage, are ever loudest in condemning disorders and excesses which probably have never taken place. I have myself visited shrines much frequented by pilgrims, and that were greatly denounced on account of the pretended excesses, and there found a most devout assembly, composed, in part, of people coming from a great distance. A large number received the holy sacraments with touching piety, after having ascended the mountain upon which the holy shrine was situated, for this purpose observing an absolute fast ; nor could I find fault with them if afterwards they relished a breakfast such as the place afforded. Many disorders or

improprieties could not have taken place, for after the most careful search I could discover none whatever. But stop! I am making a mistake; yes, I did afterwards witness the commission of excesses in the neighboring village by those whom pleasure alone had drawn thither, and who had never set foot upon the mountain or in the church. If on their account you were to suppress the pilgrimage you would thereby hardly mend matters; the good and devout would be kept away, while the others would also find there in the future what they had sought in the past—worldly amusement and pleasure.

Thomas—It is my opinion that pilgrimages, independent of the disorders which occur or do not occur at them, are in themselves an abuse and superstition. Why seek God in the distance, whom everywhere we have so near us?

Pastor—Thomas, you might as well ask: Why go to church, since God is near to us at home? why think of heaven, since God is also upon earth? and why, in general, pray to God at all, since without our prayers he knows our needs and can relieve them? But it is not the question where God is nearest to us, but where *we feel* him nearest, and in what place we are mindful of his presence with most fervor and devotion. Since you have travelled considerably, Thomas, I would like to learn from you whether you have returned from your journeys without ever having cared for or visited those monuments, buildings, and places which are remarkable on account of their historical reminiscences?

Thomas—Rather a singular question. Why, in that case I would not deserve the name of a cultured man. I have seen the house in which the celebrated painter Rubens lived. I have seen the house of Gutenberg, the inventor of the art of printing, and in—

Pastor—That will do; that will do. I do not desire you to render me an account of your travels. But did not these houses have the same appearance as the others?

Thomas—Your Reverence, you cannot surely, as an educated and enlightened man, have the intention of making little of these historical monuments. Of course they were houses like any others ; but when I say to myself, “ In this house such or such a great man has lived ; here they produced those great-works of art which to-day are the admiration of the world,” I feel elevated at the thought, and I cannot enter without awe a place in which, perhaps even now, the traces are found of their lives and their labors for the elevation or benefit of mankind. How very different the impression is which I receive from such a visit from that conveyed by a description of their place of sojourn, however minute or vivid such a description may be !

Pastor—You have no cause for excitement, Thomas, for I perceive we are of one mind on this point. But it is my belief that what you have said applies equally to those places to which some religious reminiscence is attached, or which are celebrated for some event memorable for the Christian. Whether we visit the holy places of Palestine, or the tomb of the Prince of Apostles in Rome, or the spot upon which some witness of Christ was put to death for the sake of his faith, or the place where God, in a palpably miraculous manner, heard the prayer of some sufferer, we may always say to ourselves : This spot awakens in me sentiments of holy awe ; at the thought of what once here occurred I receive an impression which I cannot obtain by reading the written accounts ; it seems to me as if I were even now an eye-witness of the occurrences that here took place ; therefore I experience here a strength of faith, a courage of confession, a power of confidence, and a measure of charity and devotion that I can experience nowhere else. We need, therefore, in no manner be surprised if in such places, by more fervent prayer, we also receive more abundant graces, and if, on this account, such spots are called places of grace. It is not even improbable that God chooses here to dispense his graces in more

abundant measure, in order to invite us to visit these places that produce such salutary impressions.

Thomas—Could it really be the will of God that we should visit such places? Just think how much precious time and how much money are lost in such a pilgrimage, especially if the place to be visited is at a great distance!

Pastor—Well, he that shrinks not from the hardships of a long journey, and is prepared to sacrifice time and money, certainly thereby gives evidence of great zeal and of an earnest desire for his own sanctification. How bright is this example of zeal and devotion, compared with the sloth of so many Christians who cannot even overcome their love for comfort and convenience so much as to undertake the weekly walk to church and devote a few hours to divine service on Sundays! That such a disposition of heart is prized in the eyes of God, and cannot remain unrewarded by graces and blessings, can hardly be doubted. Certainly he that has other more important duties to perform—for instance, the care of a family or the education of children—has no right to neglect those duties imposed upon him by God himself, and voluntarily, and according to taste, to choose other works, however salutary or meritorious they may be. Such a one would deserve severe censure if he were to leave home and family for the purpose of seeking edification at a distance, unless he had made provision for the proper performance of his domestic duties through another. In like manner would he be worthy of censure who would appropriate for such a journey money which those left behind would need for the sustenance of life. The true pilgrim is, however, least likely to bring upon himself such a reproach, for he will gladly deny himself many things to attain his object, and will, in general, be mindful of the fact that for such a journey it is more fitting to imitate the poverty of Christ, and by privations to make satisfaction for his sins, than to strive after exquisite enjoyment and comfort. On the other

hand, every family that deserves the name of Christian, will gladly aid its members to undertake a pilgrimage from which they hope for themselves spiritual advantages ; least of all will much account be made of the small sacrifice of time and money when there is question of gaining spiritual treasures for eternity.

Thomas—Well, aside from the pious impressions which we experience on visiting such places historically memorable, we certainly cannot speak of other profit for the soul and for eternity.

Pastor—The blessing and happiness that would result from this would in itself be sufficiently great ; and since you yourself have been of the opinion that no one deserves the name of a cultured man who does not deem it worth his while to visit places historically memorable, I must, for the same reason, tell you that he deserves still less the name of a *cultured Christian* who esteems lightly the places made memorable in Christian history. However, pilgrimages or visits to holy shrines do really afford yet other advantages. The large number of the faithful assembled there cannot otherwise than make an elevating and inspiring impression upon every one ; and thus each one takes home with him new fervor of devotion and prayer, which for a long time will help him on in his spiritual life and animate him in the hours of prayer. The pilgrims coming from different and for the most part distant regions thereby give testimony of their faith ; we see how all profess and practise their faith in the same manner ; and this represents to us the unity of the Catholic Church and the harmony of her members, which cannot fail in turn to strengthen our own faith. He who through the entire year frequents one and the same church, hears one and the same preacher, beholds himself surrounded by the same congregation, easily accustoms himself to all this to such a degree, that it ceases to make upon him any particular impression ; here, at the holy shrine, the strange

appearance of things, the novelty of the place, as well as those gathered together, all serve to draw him out of his every-day lukewarmness. Many a one has been guilty of transgressions for which at home, among his own, he cannot perform the appropriate acts of penance prompted by his contrite heart without creating surprise and amazement, while here, removed from the gaze of his friends, he can wholly occupy himself with God and his conscience. From these indications you may learn what rich and manifold profit the true pilgrim may draw from these pious exercises.

Thomas—You have used the right term, Your Reverence, in saying *true* pilgrims. But how small must the number of *true* pilgrims be, and how great the number of those who undertake such journeys from other motives—curiosity, pleasure, etc.!

Pastor—If you had once in your life taken part in one of these pilgrimages, you would readily have come to the conviction that the number of *true* pilgrims can hardly be called small, and that, on the contrary, those who do not deserve this name are always an exception. You could also have convinced yourself that at pilgrimages special pleasures, enjoyments, and comforts are entirely out of the question. They are mostly coupled with manifold hardships, and these are precisely a part of their advantage for spiritual life; for the fatigue of the journey, the many privations on the way, deaden man's sensuousness, and, being contrary to his accustomed luxuries of life, they bring him for once seriously to reflect upon himself. But take even for granted that many really make these pilgrimages for the sake of pleasure and from curiosity; even then we would have no reason to find great fault, since others annually make their summer tours, and at the watering-places, by riot and dissipation, rather injure than benefit their health, squander large sums of money, or perhaps their entire possessions, at the gaming-table, and withdraw themselves from the observation of their

friends frequently from motives that are anything but honorable. Even if religion and piety be not the sole motives that prompt the pilgrim to undertake such a journey, his way, at least, leads him to a place that may call forth pious thoughts and sentiments; and certainly many a one whose faith had become weak has been again strengthened when he beheld the multitude who found rich consolation and holy joy in this same faith; surely many a sinner, on seeing the devout assembly, and calling to mind the wonderful event which made the place memorable and venerable, has been filled with holy fear of God, enlightened by divine light, brought to the knowledge of his sins, and has formed the resolution, by a sincere and contrite confession, to become reconciled with his offended God. Of course we do not claim that all who take part in pilgrimages are saints, or through them become saints; neither do we excuse the abuses occurring at pilgrimages, nor the evil motives which may prompt some to participate in them.

Thomas—If pilgrimages are properly conducted they may, indeed, be productive of much good—that I must admit; but if Christ had intended that we should make pilgrimages, he would, undoubtedly, himself have commanded it, and perhaps he would even have given us an example in this respect.

Pastor—And that is precisely what he has done. On the principal Jewish feasts Christ journeyed to Jerusalem to visit the temple, in accordance with the requirements of the Mosaic law; these journeys we can hardly call anything else than pilgrimages. And, when in Jerusalem, he would often go beyond the city gates to pass the night on Mount Olivet. That the early Christians were not strangers to the custom of making pilgrimages we learn from the mouth of St. Jerome (*Ep. ad Marcellam*), who lived in Bethlehem. He says that it is impossible to enumerate all the bishops, martyrs, and other men distinguished for science and learn-

ing, who had visited Jerusalem from the day of the Lord's Ascension down to his time. They had believed that their science or religion was incomplete if they had not worshipped Christ in the same place where the Gospel of Christ was first announced. By this he would not say that true piety was not to be in the heart, neither that there were no saints elsewhere; but the most illustrious men of the Christian world had deemed it an honor to have visited the holy places. Not only to Jerusalem were pilgrimages made, but also to Rome, to the tombs of the apostles. St. Chrysostom speaks of them, and says he frequently prayed to be able to kiss the dust that covered their sacred bodies. In a similar manner the graves of holy martyrs, and other sacred places—for instance, Mount Sinai—were visited from far and near.

Simon—The early Christians, who lived only a short time after the Saviour, must have known best what was according to the mind and heart of Christ; if these have set us the example on this point, we may, without doubt, safely imitate them. But the objections of Thomas have entirely led us away from the Rogation-days. Why is the Litany of the Saints always sung on these days?

Pastor—For the same reason that I have already assigned at the blessing of the baptismal water on Holy Saturday. This litany, as you know, is divided into three parts. After having, in the introduction, addressed our supplications to the Most Holy Trinity, we appeal, in the first part, to the most illustrious saints by name, and ask them, by their prayers, to support our petitions. Then we address ourselves to those saints in a body whose life resembles those whom we have invoked by name. Thus, for example, we say, "St. Stephen, St. Lawrence, pray for us"; then, "All ye holy martyrs, pray for us." In this manner we go through the various classes into which, according to the custom of the Church, the saints are divided—namely, apostles, martyrs,

confessors (or such who, by their virtuous lives, have given testimony of Christ), virgins, and widows. After having, at the end of this series, said, "All ye saints of God, pray for us," we direct our prayers, in the second part, to the Saviour, and beseech him, by his Incarnation, Nativity, his Passion and Death, to deliver us from all sin, from all evil and misfortune, especially from the terrible consequence of sin—namely, eternal death. Finally, in the third part we implore God for the welfare of the whole Church, for its chief pastor, and for all its members, and also for special favors and benefits which we wish to obtain; and here we insert the petition: "That thou wouldst vouchsafe to give and preserve the fruits of the earth." In this manner we seek to unite with us the saints of God, and through their interest and intercession to find favor in the eyes of God, before we appeal to him ourselves. In some portions of the Church it is customary for the clergy to carry some relics of saints in the procession, thereby figuratively expressing the hope that, in view of the merits and intercession of the saints, God would show us favor and mercy.

Simon—Why are the processions of the Church generally preceded by the cross?

Pastor—For the following reasons: 1. To show that we are assembled in the name of Jesus Christ crucified. 2. To proclaim our purpose to begin and terminate our devotions in the name of Jesus, according to the admonition of St. Paul, "Whatever you do, do in the name of our Lord Jesus." 3. To confess that the crucified Saviour is our leader. 4. To declare that everything we ask for we beg of God the Father, through the name of his Son and the merits of our crucified Redeemer, remembering the promise of Christ, "If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you" (John xvi. 23). In some countries it is customary also to carry banners in the procession—a usage full of significance. The Catholic Church, as you know, is divided into the *Church*

triumphant—the blessed in heaven ; the *Church militant* upon earth—to belong to which it is our happiness ; and the *Church suffering*—namely, the souls in purgatory. The banners used on the occasions of which we speak are to indicate that, like an army, we assemble around the standard of Christ, ready to do battle for the glory of God and the salvation of our souls against our visible and invisible foes. And as a victorious army parades with flying colors to celebrate its triumphs, so we Christians parade with cross and banner before the eyes of the world, bidding defiance, as it were, to infidelity and error, in the language of St. John. “This is the victory which overcometh the world—*our faith.*”

With this explanation, and the earnest exhortation ever to show themselves true soldiers of Christ, the worthy pastor closed the conference of the evening.

CHAPTER VI.

From the Feast of the Ascension of our Lord to the Feast of Corpus Christi.

ON the arrival of the pastor on the following evening Simon thus addressed him : Father, we have been for some time holding counsel among ourselves what explanation to ask of you, but without much success.

Pastor—What is your difficulty ?

Simon—We have taken up the almanac, and have found that we have now reached the Feast of the Ascension of our Lord. and that Pentecost closely follows this festival ; but we cannot remember whether, during this time, there are any special rites or ceremonies which would call for an explanation.

Pastor—Well, I will assist you. The festivals that still remain for our consideration will not, indeed, occupy us long. On the Feast of the Ascension, as I have already told you, the Paschal candle is extinguished, which has stood burning at the Gospel side of the altar at every solemn service since Holy Saturday. This is to remind us that Christ has now left the earth, and has again returned to his Heavenly Father, as he had himself foretold: “Again I leave the world and go to the Father” (John xvi. 28). The candle is extinguished after the Gospel, because in it mention is made of the Ascension of the Lord. We may now take up the *Vigil of Pentecost*.

Simon—I have often heard and read the word *vigil*, or eve. What is the meaning of these terms ?

Pastor—The word *vigil* is synonymous with *watch*. King David, in his Psalms, exhorts us: “In the night lift up your

hands to the holy places, and bless ye the Lord" (Psalm cxxxiii. 2). And again, speaking of himself, he says: "I rose at midnight to give praise to thee" (Psalm cxviii. 62). The early Christians literally fulfilled these words. They assembled either on the evening before the feast (on which account the day before a feast is also called the eve) or on the morning of the festival itself, before the dawn of day, in order, by watching, singing of the Psalms, meditation, and prayer, to prepare themselves for the feast. In this they followed the example of the apostles, who, after Christ had ascended into heaven, locked themselves up in a room in Jerusalem, and, by united prayer, prepared themselves for the coming of the Holy Ghost. Some of the vigils therefore are fast-days, in order thus to unite several pious practices, according to the words of Tobias: "Prayer is good when combined with fasting and almsgiving." Even in the times of the persecutions these nightly vigils were customary among the Christians. Pliny, a governor in the Roman Empire, reports to Emperor Trajan, only about 70 years A.D., that "the Christians are wont on certain days to come together in the morning before dawn to sing praises to Christ as to a divinity." And Tertullian, whom I have already mentioned, while endeavoring to persuade Christian women not to enter into marriage with pagan men, says: "What pagan husband would suffer his wife to leave her home to attend the nocturnal worship?" Later, about the thirteenth century, these nightly gatherings not only fell into disuse, but were expressly forbidden by the Church, because of the many abuses which had crept into them. Hence the preceding day of certain feasts is appointed as a day of prayer and fasting preparatory to the festival. The name of vigil, or night-watch, is, however, still retained.

Simon—On the eve of Pentecost baptismal water is again blessed; is this done in the same manner as on Holy Saturday?

Pastor—In the same manner, with this difference, however : that on the eve of Pentecost only six of the prophecies are read, while on Holy Saturday all are recited. As you have again referred to the baptismal water, I will here add something that I ought to have mentioned when speaking of Easter. At Easter, as well as at Pentecost, the ordinary holy water is not used in giving the “Asperges,” but that which is blessed on the preceding day, commonly called baptismal or Easter water. This custom is calculated to recall to our minds, on these festivals, the joyous event of our own baptism, and to incite us to sentiments of gratitude towards God for the graces conferred upon us. We are furthermore reminded of the purity which should always adorn him who has been regenerated in the waters of baptism and cleansed from his sins ; and, finally, there lies in this usage an appeal to us, by penance and amendment, to remove from our souls every blemish by which we have been either deprived of the grace of baptism, or by which it has been lessened in our souls.

Simon—Is, then, holy water not the same as baptismal water ?

Pastor—Holy water is blessed throughout the year on every Sunday, or as often as necessary, and is not used in giving baptism, but only for the “Asperges,” and other blessings. In blessing this water the priest prays: “O God! who, for the benefit of mankind, hast made use of the element of water in the greatest sacraments, mercifully hear our prayers, and impart the virtue of thy blessing to this element, prepared by many kinds of purifications, that this thy creature, made use of in thy mysteries, may receive the effect of thy divine grace for banishing devils and curing diseases ; and that whosoever shall be sprinkled with this water in the houses or places of the faithful, may be free from all uncleanness and delivered from evil. Let no pestilential breath reside there, nor infectious air ; let all the snares of the hidden

enemy be baffled ; and may whatever endangers the safety or repose of the inhabitants of that place be put to flight by the sprinkling of this water, that the welfare which we seek by the invocation of thy holy name may be defended from every assault, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Then the priest mingles salt, previously blessed by similar prayers, with the water, saying : " May this salt and water be mixed together in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." After this he recites the following prayer :

" We pray and beseech thee, O Lord, with dread and humility, to regard with favor this creature of salt and water, to ennoble it with thy bounty, and to sanctify it with the dew of thy fatherly goodness, that wheresoever it shall be sprinkled, all annoyances of the unclean spirit may depart, and all fear of the venomous serpent may be dispelled, through the invocation of thy holy name; and that the presence of the Holy Ghost may be everywhere with us, who seek thy mercy, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Simon—Why is salt mingled with the water ?

Pastor—The salt, which is ordinarily used to preserve perishable things from corruption, is here figuratively to remind us that, after having cleansed our souls, we are for the future carefully to guard them against the corruption of sin and the snares of Satan.

Simon—Why does the priest sprinkle the people on Sundays before Mass with holy water ?

Pastor—To remind us that, when assisting at the divine service, we should appear pure and holy in the sight of God; and for the same reason we make use of the holy water on entering the church. Then this usage also recalls to our mind holy baptism, in which, through the water, we were sanctified; and it serves likewise as an exhortation carefully to preserve the purity with which we were then clothed, or by penance again to recover it, if we have been unfortunate

enough to lose it. It furthermore reminds us that we have all been sprinkled and cleansed with the blood of Jesus Christ, according to the words of St. Peter (1 Pet. i. 2): "For a sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," and of St. John (Rev. i. 5): "Who hath washed us from our sins in his blood." Hence, also, the words of the Psalmist are sung during the "Asperges": "Sprinkle me, O Lord! with nyssep, and I shall be cleansed; wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow." The priest thrice sprinkles the altar before turning to the people, partly to manifest our reverence for the holy mysteries which are performed upon it, and to exhort us to assist at them worthily, and partly to indicate that all power of sanctification proceeds from Christ, of whom the altar is a symbol. On leaving the church at the end of divine service we again make use of the holy water, to admonish us that also away from church, in our daily avocations, we should strive to lead pure and holy lives, and to this end to fortify ourselves with the blessing of God for our every-day duties, and guard ourselves against all harm of body and soul. For the same reasons we also preserve and make use of the holy water in our dwellings.

Thomas—I cannot deny, Your Reverence, that your explanations concerning holy water give me an entirely different view of the matter. I see, indeed, that really excellent figurative instructions are afforded, where before I had only suspected an ancient, meaningless usage. Still, I cannot be wholly reconciled to one of your expressions.

Pastor—You mean to say, no doubt, that you cannot admit that the holy water is not merely a symbol, but really preserves those who use it from harm, or obtains for them special graces from God. Am I right?

Thomas—You have guessed my objection.

Pastor—I have now somewhat learned your tastes and views, so that I may venture for once to guess at your sentiments. Now, if I were to tell you that not only your rela.

tives, but the entire Catholic Church had united to implore God to avert from you all evils of soul and body, do you think that such a prayer would be of any use to you ?

Thomas—I have not the least doubt that it would.

Pastor—And if I told you that the Catholic Church has commissioned some one to pray for you in the name of all ?

Thomas—I would be very grateful for it, and would not doubt in the least of the good result of such a prayer.

Pastor—Now, this is precisely what happens at the blessing of the holy water. The priest prays, in the name and by the commission of the Catholic Church, that God would bless the water, and give to those using it the graces which I recited above. Strive, therefore, to be one of those who devoutly use the holy water, and the priest, or rather the Catholic Church, through him, will have prayed also for you. The prayers of the Church are attached to the holy water, and every one using it in the proper manner may participate in the fruits of these prayers.

Thomas—Why, in that case the holy water would be a sacrament.

Pastor—With this great difference : that in the sacraments God confers upon us graces which are necessary for us unto eternal life, and which we cannot obtain in any other manner ; and, furthermore, these graces are directly communicated to us by the sacraments, while in the case of the holy water the Church begs God to give his graces and blessings to those making proper use of the holy water ; hence the conferring of these blessings depends entirely upon whether God shall deem it advantageous to grant the prayer, and whether those making use of the holy water are worthy of God's favors.

Thomas—But the practice, which many have, of sprinkling their houses, food, and other things, and even animals, with holy water, must certainly be superstitious and reprehensible.

Pastor—On the contrary, this practice is entirely in accordance with the intention of the prayer of the Church which I cited above—namely, that “whoever might be sprinkled with this water in their houses and in other places might be preserved from harm.” Why, therefore, should not the Christian sprinkle with holy water whatever he possesses and uses, in order thus to extend the intercession of the Church to all his surroundings? The Church herself makes use of the holy water on every occasion. She sprinkles with it the newly-built house of the living, as well as the coffin of the dead; the vestments of the priest, as well as the different objects which are blessed for the use of the faithful—everything in order to obtain the favors for which she asks at the blessing of the holy water.

Thomas—I had deemed it a desecration to waste the holy water on lifeless things and irrational animals.

Pastor—If it be no desecration of prayer to ask for the blessing and preservation of our temporal possessions, then it can neither be a desecration of the holy water, which derives its value solely from the prayer of the Church, if we use it for the blessing of our earthly goods.

Simon—On the Feast of Pentecost we commemorate the coming-down of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles; how is it, then, that the Jews also celebrate a Feast of Pentecost?

Pastor—On this day the Jews commemorate the delivery unto Moses of the stone tablets of the law upon Mount Sinai. This took place fifty days after they had eaten the paschal lamb in Egypt and taken their departure thence. On the fiftieth day after the Feast of Easter, of the New Covenant, the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles to strengthen them for the preaching of the new law, and to impart to all Christians light and grace to believe in Christ, and live according to his teachings. As upon Mount Sinai God gave his holy commandments amid thunder and lightning, so also at Jerusalem the Holy Ghost came down amid the

rushing of the winds, and in the form of tongues of fire ; and as Moses made known to the assembled people the will of God, so on the Christian Feast of Pentecost St. Peter preached to the assembled Jews, for the first time, the doctrine of the Gospel. Perhaps it would be well here to give you the meaning of the word Pentecost. Pentecost is a Greek word, and signifies the fiftieth day (namely, after Easter).

Simon—Many thanks for your kindness in adding this explanation ; perhaps it would not have occurred to us to ask it. Now, I presume, the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity is next in order ?

Pastor—Yes, unless we take occasion here to speak of the Ember-days, or quarterly fasts, which at some time or other will have to occupy our attention.

Simon—True ; Ember-days occur in the week following the Feast of Pentecost. What do these fast-days signify ?

Pastor—In Zacharias (viii. 19) we read : “ The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Juda joy and gladness and great solemnities.” Thus we find that even the Jews observed certain fast-days at different periods. Now, we can scarcely assume that the apostles, on introducing Christianity, made these fast-days of the Jews obligatory upon the Christians, for the reason that they dispensed the converts to Christianity from the observance of those Mosaic laws which had reference to divine worship ; but it is probable that the immediate successors of the apostles, recognizing the utility and advantage of these quarterly fasts, ordained them to be observed by the *Christians*. Pope Leo the Great (440–460 after Christ) calls these fasts apostolical and lawful ordinances, and says that they were formerly a Jewish observance, but were now also introduced into the Christian dispensation. These fasts occur at the four seasons of the year (whence they are also

called quartertenses)—namely, in the first week of **Lent**; in the week after Pentecost; then on the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday nearest to the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross; and, finally, in the week after the third Sunday of Advent. The reason why we observe these fasts at the four seasons of the year is to do penance, and by abstinence, discipline, and temperance to make amends for the manifold irregularities and excesses which we may have committed during the quarter. On these days we ought further to implore the blessing of God upon our temporal goods, and return him thanks for past favors. Finally, on the Ember-days Holy Orders are conferred upon those who have prepared themselves for the sacred ministry, and therefore all the faithful *should fast and pray*, in order that, in consideration of these works of piety and mortification, God may give to his Church saintly and God-fearing priests. In this connection I will draw your attention to something else which may have escaped your notice—namely, that throughout the entire time from Easter to the eve of Pentecost there occur no fast-days. The reason of this is, because these seven weeks are a period of general joy, and we deem fast-days, which are days of spiritual sadness and sorrow, incompatible with a period in which we commemorate the joyous and glorious resurrection of Christ, and his sojourn among his apostles. In this we are guided by the answer which Christ gave to the disciples of St. John the Baptist, when they asked him why his own disciples did not fast: “Can the companions of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast” (Matt. ix. 15). This has been the custom from the early days of Christianity, and hence it is that to-day the vigil of Pentecost, and the Ember-days in the octave of Pentecost, are the first after Easter which we observe as fast-days. Now, my dear friends, we have reached the end

of the Paschal time, which closes with the Saturday after Pentecost.

Simon—I was under the impression that the Paschal time ended with the last day on which the Easter duty can be performed.

Pastor—Let me explain. In the beginning, the Easter communion was received by all Christians on the day on which Christ instituted the Most Holy Eucharist—namely, on Maundy Thursday. The faithful intended thereby to call to mind the unbounded love of the Saviour, and, as it were, to appear at the banquet of the Lord in company with the apostles, who on that day, for the first time, partook of the sacred flesh and blood of their Master. But when the increased number of the faithful made it impossible for all to receive Holy Communion on the same day, especially because of the want of sufficient confessors to hear their confessions on the previous day, the time fixed for the Paschal Communion was extended for several days or weeks, so that all who would approach the holy sacraments within the extended time were regarded as having received Holy Communion on the day of the institution of the Holy Eucharist. This time appointed for the reception of the Easter Communion is commonly called the Paschal time. But, in the language of the Church, “Paschal time” signifies the fifty days from Easter to Pentecost, to which is added the octave of Pentecost, so that the Paschal time proper ends with the eve of Trinity Sunday.

Simon—May we now proceed to the consideration of the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity? Why is it that this feast is celebrated on the Sunday following Pentecost?

Pastor—Because the mystery of the Holy Trinity is the fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion, which the apostles preached to the nations, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, in compliance with the injunction of their Divine Master: “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations. bap-

tizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19). This festival is to remind us to believe firmly all the Christian truths which were presented to our minds in the precious feasts of the ecclesiastical year, and openly and fearlessly to profess our faith. From Advent to Pentecost we had opportunity, moreover, successively to consider the three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity. Advent reminded us of the creation of man, and, therefore, of God the Father as Creator; from Christmas till Pentecost the incarnate Son of God formed the subject of our considerations; and on the Feast of Pentecost we commemorated the descent of the Holy Ghost. The three Persons of the Trinity constitute *One God*, and on the Feast of the Trinity we unite them once more in a single festival, in order to offer our homage to the Divine Majesty, and to show to the three Persons together our humble adoration. This festival reminds us further of the benefits for which we are indebted to each of the three Divine Persons, and which we considered on each of the preceding feasts of the year—namely, how we were created, redeemed, and sanctified; and in this manner this feast should awaken in us sentiments of deepest gratitude for the inestimable favors received. The right and title to these spiritual benefits was conferred upon us in Holy Baptism, which we received in the name of the Most Holy Trinity. After having learned in the course of the year what God has done for us, we ought to recall the solemn promises which we made in baptism, and, again, firmly to resolve faithfully to fulfil the duties assumed in baptism. This is called the *renewal of the baptismal vows*.

Simon—Then, it seems to me, this day should be celebrated more solemnly than any other in the year, and yet this is not done.

Pastor—The Church has at all times cultivated a special devotion in honor of the Blessed Trinity. The doxology, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son," etc., of which we

make such frequent use, dates from the earliest days of Christianity. We find it in the writings of St. Basil, St. Athanasius, and others of the Fathers. The addition, "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen," was probably made by the Council of Nice in the year 325, in condemnation of the heresy of Arius, who taught that the Son was not co-eval with the Father, but proceeded from him in time. As often as we make the sign of the cross we say: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." With these holy names we begin and end the day, our prayers, our labors, and our repose. The priest pronounces these names not only when conferring baptism, as Christ has expressly ordained, but also in the administration of nearly every sacrament. Whatever he blesses, he blesses invoking these holy names. Moreover, every Sunday is set apart and dedicated to the honor and adoration of the Tri-une God. Sunday is the day on which the Father began the creation of the world, on which the Son went forth triumphant from the grave, and on which the Holy Ghost came down upon the apostles. Thus the whole life of the Christian is replete with recollections of the Most Holy Trinity; hence no special festival was celebrated in honor of this mystery in the early Church. It is only about the ninth century that we meet with a special feast in honor of the Blessed Trinity. At first it was celebrated only in particular localities, but, having gradually spread, it was finally appointed as a feast-day for the entire Church. From the foregoing you may readily understand why we do not celebrate this feast with especial pomp and solemnity.

Simon—You alluded before to the Sunday; why is it that we keep Sunday, and not the Sabbath which God commanded to be observed in the ancient covenant?

Pastor—From the very beginning of Christianity Sunday, or the first day of the week, was regarded as a sacred day,

because on it, according to the account of St. Mark (xvi. 2), Christ arose again triumphant from the grave. Guided by the Holy Ghost, the apostles transferred the celebration of the Sabbath to the following day, or Sunday, in order thus the more to glorify the memory of the resurrection of the Lord, and the more firmly to fix in the minds of the faithful this important mystery of the Christian religion. Hence Sunday is also called the Lord's day, because it is, in an especial manner, dedicated to the memory and adoration of the Divine Saviour. Moreover, it was on Sunday, as I have already said, that Christ fulfilled his last promise made to his apostles—namely, to send them the Holy Ghost—and with this glorious event the first foundation was laid of the Church of Christ. We must adore and serve God every day of our lives ; but as we are to devote, in an especial manner, one day of the week to his holy service, what day can be more suitable for this purpose than Sunday, which has been made memorable by such glorious and happy events ? And on what day could we pray more fervently and more ardently, than on that on which God bestowed upon us his greatest gifts and graces ?

Simon—You made mention a little while ago of the sign of the cross ; and from your observation I infer that we make the sign of the cross in honor of the Most Holy Trinity.

Pastor—Not to that end alone. You must distinguish between the sign of the cross and the words we use in making it. By the words we give expression to our firm belief in, and veneration for, the Blessed Trinity, and make an open profession of this belief. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is a brief compendium of the teachings of Christianity. Hence, in professing our belief in this mystery, we at the same time proclaim our faith in all the doctrines of our holy religion. We further begin our prayers, labors, etc., with the sign of the cross, saying : “ In the name of the

Father," etc. This is equivalent to a solemn declaration that we intend to undertake and perform all things in the name, and in obedience to the Tri-une God, and that from him we expect blessing and success for all our undertakings.

Simon—Now, what is the meaning of the *sign* of the cross which we make in using these words ?

Pastor—We sign ourselves with it to confess publicly that we believe in Christ, true God and true man, who redeemed us through the cross, according to the words of St. Peter (1 Pet. ii. 24), who bore our sins in his own body on the tree [of the cross], . . . by whose stripes ye are healed." 2. To show that we are not ashamed of the crucified Son of God, but fearlessly confess him before friend and foe, and say, with St. Paul and the entire Christian Church : "Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal. vi. 14). 3. By the sign of the cross we express the wish and prayer that, through the merits of the crucified Saviour, we may be preserved from all evils of soul and body, and that, in view of the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross, our daily labors and our various occupations may prosper and become meritorious in the sight of God. 4. We thereby gratefully call to mind the ineffable blessing of the Redemption, which was wrought for us by means of the cross, and strive to excite us to constant gratitude. Thus we profess in a twofold manner our belief, as well in the Most Holy Trinity, as also in Christ our Redeemer.

Simon—And the custom to bless ourselves with the sign of the cross has, no doubt, been for a long time observed in the Catholic Church ?

Pastor—As regards the *words* alluded to above, we find them in use about three hundred years after Christ ; the custom to use the *sign* of the cross is, however, much older. In the year 287 St. Fides, together with several associates, was put to death for the sake of the faith. On these occa-

sions the Christians took care accurately to put down in writing everything that transpired at the executions, in order by these Acts of the Martyrs (as the description of the manner of their death was called, and which they sent to each other) mutually to encourage and fortify themselves. In the account given of the execution of St. Fides special mention is made of the circumstance that the saint, before giving herself up to the executioner, signed her forehead, lips, and chest with the sign of the cross, as we still do at the reading of the Gospel. Tertullian, who lived in the second century, says ("Coron. Milit.," c. 3) of the Christians of his time: "As often as we move, or go out or come in, whether we put on our clothes or shoes, bathe or sit down to the table, or strike a light, sit down or lie down, we always make the sign of the cross upon our foreheads." The reason why the Christians used the sign of the cross while performing trifling and insignificant actions, was because the pagans were accustomed on these occasions to observe all sorts of superstitious practices; hence the Christians were most careful in all these things to appear different from them. St. Cyrillus, Bishop of Jerusalem from the year 350 to 386, instructed the catechumens thus: "Sign your foreheads with the sign of the cross, that the devils may tremble and fly on beholding this truly royal sign; make this sign when you eat or drink, sit or lie, rise, speak, or walk; in a word, at all your actions. For He that was here crucified now reigns in heaven. If he had remained entombed in the sepulchre, we would perhaps have to be ashamed; but now that he is risen, we need not blush at the emblem of his victory." So, too, St. Jerome (in the year 331) admonishes the virgin Eustochium, in a letter, to make the sign of the cross at whatever she undertook. And St. Augustine says of the Christians of his time (serm. 13, De Temp.): "We carry the cross, upon which Christ died, upon our foreheads."

Simon—Then they do certainly very wrong who despise this ancient Christian custom, or who, from foolish shame, omit to observe it.

Pastor—Certainly ; and of them may be said what St. Paul wrote to one of his congregations (Philipp. iii. 18): “For many walk of whom I have told you often (and now tell you weeping) that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction.” For if by their manner of life they had not made themselves unworthy of the cross, why should they blush at it ? Or are they ashamed to pass for Christians ? How ungrateful they then are towards the Saviour, who for our sakes endured contempt and obloquy ! How unworthy it is to be ashamed of one’s Saviour and heavenly Benefactor, while no subject or servant is ashamed to wear the colors or the livery of his earthly king or master ! And what a folly it is to be ashamed of the Christian faith, which need not now, as in former days, hide itself in subterranean vaults, but which millions gratefully and joyfully confess ! How dangerous, finally, it is, for eternity, to be ashamed of Christ, who has told us : “Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of God also confess before the angels of God. But he that shall deny me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God” (Luke xii. 8).

Thomas—I cannot deny that sometimes, when in society with those not of my faith, I have been ashamed to make the sign of the cross, and must confess that in this I was wrong. But surely the superstitious use of the sign of the cross cannot be defended ?

Pastor—What would you call a superstitious use of the sign of the cross ?

Thomas—Well, for instance, blessing one’s self when it thunders and lightens, making the sign of the cross upon a fresh loaf of bread before cutting it, and blessing with the sign of the cross even sick animals.

Pastor—If you have no other instances to mention, I cannot admit that in these cases there is any superstition. All blessing, both of soul and body, comes to us from the Father, through the mediation of the Son and the merits of Jesus Christ, which he purchased by his death upon the cross. If we may beg our Heavenly Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ and the merits of his Passion, to protect our dwellings against evil, we may also mark with the sign of the cross the numerous objects for the blessing of which we pray, in order thus to express emblematically that through the death of Christ upon the cross we hope for favors and blessings. This was also the view which actuated the conduct of the Christians of the earliest times. Not only the bread, but all food was blessed by prayer and the sign of the cross before eating it; and the faithful did not even do this themselves, but brought these objects to church, where, as early as the fourth century, men were specially appointed to perform these blessings. It was customary to mark with the sign of the cross, as if with a seal, the houses, utensils, and vessels which the Christians used. And in the fourth century we likewise meet with instances where animals were blessed with the sign of the cross to protect them against sickness.

As regards those who bless themselves with the sign of the cross during a thunder-storm, it may be that many of them forget that the hand of God can reach them at every hour; and though it is folly to be mindful of the presence of God only in a thunder-storm, and to think of death only in the hour of danger, still a thunder-storm is a specially earnest admonition to his creatures, and the destruction of life and property that result therefrom are frequent enough to justify us, in those hours of danger, to arm ourselves with the sign of the cross. So also is it folly to believe that certain days are specially “unlucky,” and that at certain periods the evil spirits have a particular power over us, and therefore, at these times, to mark the doors of our dwellings with

the sign of the cross, in order to protect ourselves against them. But, notwithstanding this, it will ever be an act of Christian wisdom to seek for protection and safety in the sign of the cross, and, if we choose, after the custom of the ancient Christians, with it to ornament the doors of our dwellings.

Thomas—Can we, then, really attribute a special power to the sign of the cross ?

Pastor—If we do so we therein but follow the example of our Christian forefathers. Without mentioning the numerous miracles which were wrought through the sign of the cross by the ancient Christians, I will only repeat, as far as my memory will serve me, the words which St. Chrysostom once addressed to his people in a sermon. This saint lived, as you have already heard, not four hundred years after Christ, and was a man so enlightened that even the enemies of Christianity will hardly dare to accuse him of superstition. “Let no one,” he says, “be ashamed of the sacred and venerable emblem of our redemption, but let us look upon the cross of Christ as a most precious crown. For it is the sign of our salvation, of our common freedom, and of the mercy of the Lord, who like a lamb was led to the slaughter. Hence, if you sign yourself with it, consider the full signification of the cross, eradicate in yourself every angry feeling and every evil inclination, and be filled with great confidence. For it is unbecoming to make this sign thoughtlessly. You must do it with reflection and with confidence. If in this manner you make the sign of the cross, no impure spirit will be able to resist you when he beholds the sword that inflicted upon him the fatal wound. If we regard with repugnance the spot where malefactors are executed, what must be the feelings of the devil when he beholds the weapon with which Christ overcame his power and struck off the head of the dragon ! Therefore be not ashamed of so glorious a sign, that Christ may not

be ashamed of you when he shall come in his glory, and this sign, more resplendent than the sun, shall be borne before him. Then will the cross indeed appear, and give evidence before the world to justify the cause of God, and show that he has left nothing undone. This sign, in the times of our forefathers and in our own, has opened bolted doors, made harmless poisoned food and drink, and healed the bites of venomous reptiles. And should this cause us to marvel? If it has struck down the gates of hell, opened the portals of heaven, again smoothed the pass to paradise, and broken the fetters of Satan, why should it not heal the bites of venomous reptiles? Therefore sink deep into your souls the memory of this glorious sign. The cross has saved and made new the face of earth, destroyed error, announced the truth, changed earth into heaven, and made angels of men. By means of the cross death has ceased to be death; it has been converted into peaceful sleep. By means of the cross all our enemies have been struck to the ground. If therefore, any one asks, 'Do you adore Christ crucified?' answer, with resolute voice and cheerful look: 'I adore him, and will forever adore him.' If he contemptuously smiles at this, do you shed tears over him and thank God for the many benefits received, of which the knowledge even came to you solely through his revelation" (In Matth. Hom. 54 and 55). This is about the language of this illustrious Father of the Church; and besides the assurance which he gives of the power of the sign of the holy cross, he so earnestly exhorts his hearers not to be ashamed of this glorious sign, that I can only wish that you may carefully observe and faithfully follow his words.

Simon—I have no doubt that every one here present will gladly and cheerfully promise this.

Thomas—As for myself, I am resolved never again to be ashamed of this sign, whose value and venerable age I have learned to-day for the first time.

Simon—Why do we make three small crosses at the reading of the Gospel at Mass and before the sermon?

Pastor—We make the sign of the cross first upon the forehead. As the forehead is openly shown, and no one conceals his face, we declare our readiness, by our works, to make an open profession of the teachings of the Gospel, after the example of the apostle, who (Rom. i. 16) says of himself: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel." We make the sign of the cross, secondly, upon the lips, to indicate that we are prepared to confess the Catholic doctrines by word of mouth before friend and foe, and, if need be, to defend them; according to the words of Christ: "Whosoever shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. x. 32). We finally make the sign of the cross upon the chest, to express our determination to follow the admonition of St. Paul: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philipp. ii. 5). By this threefold sign of the cross we, moreover, express the prayer that through the power of the cross, God would give us grace with our mind to understand, with our lips to profess, and with our heart to love the Gospel.

Simon—The priest also blesses with the sign of the cross the people at the end of the Mass.

Pastor—This is done to impart to the assembled faithful the rich blessings of grace, which Christ gained for us by his death upon the cross, of which St. Paul says: "Praised be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual gifts and heavenly favors through Christ Jesus." About the year 500 we find ordinances of councils of the Church directing the bishops and priests to dismiss the people at the end of divine service with a blessing, but also directing the people not to leave the church before the blessing has been given.

As no other questions were propounded, the pastor continued: We will not speak of the blessing without partici-

pating in it. To conclude our conference of to-day, may, through my hand, be imparted to you the blessing of God the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Thus he spoke, and dismissed the people, making over the assembly the sign of the cross.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Feast of Corpus Christi.

SIMON—To-day Your Reverence, you will permit us to ask some questions about the Feast of Corpus Christi.

Pastor—Yes, the subject of our conference this evening shall be the solemnity of this festival. But first of all I must tell you the meaning of the title. *Corpus* is a Latin word signifying *body*. From this you may readily divine that this feast is the—

Simon—SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY BODY OF CHRIST.

Pastor—Correct. Now, in this one word *body* we find pretty accurately expressed the signification or object of the feast. We call to mind on this day, and, indeed, throughout the whole week (for this festival also has an octave), the fact that our Saviour is really and substantially present upon our altars, with his divinity and humanity, with flesh and blood, and we strive, by our adoration, to show to him our gratitude for the incomprehensible love he has manifested for us in the institution of this sacred mystery.

Simon—And for such a favor we cannot really be grateful enough; for, as you recently remarked in your sermon, our Divine Redeemer loved us so much that he would die for us, and he again loved us so much that he could not bear to be separated from us by death. Now, by the institution of the Most Holy Eucharist he remains always in our midst, and thus literally fulfils the promise made to his apostles: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 21).

Pastor—Therefore, too, the Church has left nothing undone to celebrate this festival with all possible grandeur and magnificence.

· *Simon*—Particularly by the solemn procession with the Blessed Sacrament.

Pastor—The whole service on the Feast of Corpus Christi tends to this end, although the solemn procession, in which the Blessed Sacrament is carried, constitutes the principal feature of the festival.

Simon—What is the meaning of the procession, attended with so much pomp, on this day?

Pastor—The first meaning is that in this manner we profess our belief in this holy sacrament, and show that we are prepared, even in the face of the opponents of our faith, to make an open and courageous avowal of our belief.

We desire, secondly, to render public honor and adoration to the Son of God. At the same time it is our purpose, by this public and solemn act of religion, in some manner to make reparation for the dishonor and irreverence shown during the year, by word or deed, to the Blessed Sacrament by unbelievers as well as bad Catholics. The former deny the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, and the latter often outrage the same by unworthy communions.

Thirdly, we seek thus to extol the great dignity and sublimity of the holy mystery, and endeavor mutually to excite each other to greater devotion towards the Blessed Sacrament.

Fourthly, we desire to return thanks to our Saviour for the ineffable love he has shown us in the institution of the Holy Eucharist, as well as for the inestimable favors we receive in Holy Communion ; and the recollection of the love of our Lord ought, at the same time, to admonish and urge us more frequently to appear as guests at his holy banquet.

Fifthly, we endeavor to change our streets and public places into temples of God, as it were, and desire to sanctify our houses and our fields along which we direct our steps in accompanying the Most Blessed Sacrament ; while, at the same time, we hope to draw down God's blessing upon the city, country, and people.

Finally, we would obtain for ourselves, by this solemn procession, some religious consolation and spiritual joy, and, by means of it, a foretaste of the joys of heaven, where the just "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" (Apoc. xiv. 4).

Simon—Was this festival also celebrated in this manner in remote times?

Pastor—The celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi is of more recent origin, having been appointed for general observance throughout the Church by Pope Urban IV. in the year 1264. I would not, however, have you understand that the Church only then began to show honor to the Blessed Sacrament. This was done from the times of the apostles. The honor and adoration of the Holy Eucharist has ever been the heart and centre, the very essence, of Catholic worship. In the days of persecution the Christians stood in need of a higher, a divine power, that their courage might not be shaken—their fortitude remain unwavering in the presence of the instruments of torture and the horrible preparations for their death; and this supernatural strength was imparted to them in the Most Holy Sacrament, which they received every Sunday. Yea, that the martyrs might not be deprived of this strengthening food of the soul in the moment of danger, in the face of certain and cruel death, it was customary for them, on the outbreak of a new persecution, to take the precious body of our Lord, under the appearance of bread, home with them to their dwellings, and before it to perform their daily devotions, and then partake of it as the viaticum for their journey into eternity. In every house, in every dwelling that gave shelter to a Christian, there was erected a tabernacle, whose splendor and ornament consisted in the living faith of him who knelt before it in adoration. The simplicity of the honor and veneration shown to the Holy Eucharist in those days was necessitated by external circumstances during the constant bloody persecutions.

But when these persecutions ceased after the conversion of Constantine, and the Church could come forth from the Catacombs and conduct her worship in the light of day, grand and majestic temples were everywhere erected to the honor and glory of God. And the principal part of these churches, that part upon which the painter and sculptor exhausted his art, and for the adornment of which the Christians deemed nothing too precious or costly—I should rather say, for which nothing was precious enough, and for which, with holy enthusiasm, they offered all their wealth in gold and silver and precious stones—that part was the sanctuary, and in its centre the altar, upon which the holy mysteries were celebrated in the most precious vessels. Emperors and kings, and others who had been favored with earthly goods, brought the choicest and the best of their treasure to the foot of the altar; for the conviction lived in their hearts that to Him who, out of love for us, would dwell under the appearance of bread and wine, no adequate honor or veneration can be shown by those for whose spiritual life he deigns in this manner to be present.

Besides this manner of honoring and glorifying the Most Holy Eucharist, which was everywhere observed, we occasionally meet, in the fifth and sixth centuries, processions of the Blessed Sacrament, on special festivals, within the walls of the church. These were not yet held in the public streets, because the lively faith and the great zeal and fervor the Christians displayed in attending divine worship and in receiving the sacraments was, in itself, a sufficient profession of their faith in the eyes of the world. But a change was gradually brought about, occasioned by the contradiction and opposition of some to this most important dogma of the Christian faith.

Thomas—It is true, then, that the dogma of the Real Presence met with opposition and contradiction?

Pastor—Certainly, just as at all times the moral precepts of

Christianity have met with contradiction—that is to say, with violation on the part of individuals. There is not a single doctrine of our holy faith that has not at some time been assailed; but he who would from this fact draw the conclusion, or base upon it the assertion, that the particular doctrine thus assailed, either by individuals or whole sects, was not always and everywhere believed and taught by the Church, would necessarily have to assume that there were times when theft, robbery, murder, and adultery and other misdeeds were not regarded as crimes, because at all times there were some who were guilty of these misdemeanors. And as the Church always raised her voice against these evil-doers, she also entered the lists against the authors of falsehood and error; and she was not content simply to formulate, in the clearest and most precise terms, the truths thus assailed, but, wherever it was possible, she embodied her teaching in the life and practices of her faithful, stamping them with a character that could not be misinterpreted.

This we find particularly in the case of the dogma of the Real Presence. As early as the end of the ninth century the erroneous views of one John Scotus Erigena regarding this holy mystery were refuted and condemned by the councils of the Church. After the lapse of two centuries a certain Berengarius, of Tours, revived and again brought to light this long-forgotten error, and also met with the fate of its original author. It is said that at the end of his life he deplored his errors, and, with a contrite heart, died in the bosom of the Church. But the spirit of contradiction did not die with him. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw spring up a sect, or rather a fearful conspiracy, which, under various names, spread over the countries of Europe, disseminating everywhere the seeds of the most abominable doctrines. They assailed not so much the particular tenets of our holy faith as the Church herself, and directed their blasphemies against her Divine Founder,

branding Christ and his apostles as frauds and teachers of falsehood.

To vindicate the divine character of Christ, and loudly and publicly to proclaim his actual and real presence in the Most Holy Eucharist, special feasts were instituted in honor of this sublime mystery. This was particularly done in those regions whence these false teachings had gone forth, or where they had been most spread and stubbornly maintained—namely, in the south of France, Belgium, and Italy. In the celebration of these festivals the Church and the faithful left nothing undone, by the employment of all their riches, the splendor of precious vestments, of valuable objects of gold and silver, of flowers and tapestry, of pictures and frankincense, worthy to honor and adore Him present under the lowly appearance of bread. And the devout and pious taking part in these festivals was not only an open profession of faith, but also a public and distinctive mark by which the adherents to error were recognized; hence these festivals rapidly spread over all parts of the world, until, at the end of the thirteenth century, Pope Urban IV. appointed the Feast of Corpus Christi as a day to be observed by the entire Church for the adoration of Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament. When afterwards, in the year 1312, the General Council of Vienne, held under Pope Clement V., repeated and ratified, in the most solemn manner, the ordinance of Urban IV., it soon transpired that the faithful no longer confined their joy, their exultation and adoration within the ornamented walls of their churches; they were impelled by their feelings to accompany their Lord and God, who, from love of us, has chosen to veil himself under the lowly form of bread, in triumphal procession into the streets of the city and into the highways of the country, that he might receive from all homage and adoration, and, again, that he might bless all those who could not visit him in his sanctuary—the tottering old man as well as the nursing infant; the sick

upon their bed of suffering as well as those who, in the charity of the good Samaritan, nurse and care for them. And even to-day, in most places, the Blessed Sacrament is carried, amid prayers and hymns, amid the strains of music and the ringing of bells, beyond the confines of the village into the verdant plains and blooming fields—thus, as it were, calling upon the whole of creation, upon all nature, to unite in the praise and glory of their Lord, at the same time confessing that he who is truly and really present under the appearance of bread, is the Lord and creator, and preserver of all things; that every blessing proceeds from him; that as he imparts to us in the Blessed Sacrament the food for our souls, he likewise graciously gives to us the nourishment of the body in the fruits of the earth. All classes of society, without exception, take part in these processions. It was formerly a punishment to be excluded from them, which was inflicted upon those who had given public scandal and had not yet atoned for their fault. The higher the dignity of a man, the more exalted the position he occupied, the greater was his desire to take part in the procession. Emperors and kings, bearing in their hands burning tapers, devoutly accompanied the Blessed Sacrament. Princes and nobles vied with each other for the honor of filling some office, or rendering some service in its immediate surroundings.

Thomas—But cannot I show this reverence and adoration in church without going outside?

Pastor—Certainly. We should always show our homage and adoration to our Lord in his church; but that does not prevent you from manifesting it on special occasions in a more striking and public manner. You may entertain the highest reverence and esteem for a man of distinguished merits, and daily show him your regard privately within four walls; but if an opportunity should present itself of openly manifesting your respect for him—if, for instance, some grand parade were held in his honor, and you should decline

to join in this mark of public esteem, you could scarcely find fault with those who would doubt the sincerity of your sentiments. He that truly reveres Christ will not timidly conceal his reverence in his heart, but will deem himself fortunate if an opportunity offers to give external evidence of the same.

Thomas—I would let what you say pass, if these processions were really a mark of honor and reverence in the eyes of God. But we certainly cannot for a moment think that God is pleased with a demonstration of honor, such as we would show some distinguished personage. God looks upon the heart.

Pastor—You are right, God looks upon the heart ; and he that would join in this procession merely for appearance sake, without having faith and reverence in his heart, could certainly not flatter himself that thereby he has gained for himself the approbation and favor of God. If, however, our hearts are filled with faith and veneration, I cannot see why we should do violence to our natural inclinations urging us to give outward evidence to our sentiments ; and this, I presume, would have to be done in a human way, since we are but men, and not angels. When once we shall have taken possession of our eternal inheritance, then, no doubt, we shall find other appropriate ways of discharging our duty and of satisfying the longings of our soul.

Thomas—I understand that very well, and would gladly agree with you, if only these processions did not interfere with true devotion. But the whole seems to tend to a mere pageant, and few or no prayers are said at them.

Pastor—If this pageant, as you call it, edifies and inspires by its splendor and magnificence, it has already been productive of considerable good, having at least given an impulse to future devotion. But you do not seem to have the true idea of prayer. If with the lips we give utterance before God to the pious sentiments of our heart, we have prayed ; but not because we have made use of our lips, but

because we have devotion in the heart. Now, suppose we were to express the devotion, veneration, and adoration of our heart, not by mere words, but by deeds ; would that be any the less a prayer? St. Paul demands of Christians that they should pray without ceasing. Now, if by this were meant that we should uninterruptedly utter vocal prayers, or even be constantly as collected interiorly as we usually are in the hours of devotion, it is apparent to every one how impossible this would be. But we can pray constantly and without intermission, if our actions are the expression of our pious sentiments, and if in our daily lives we show and practise what in the hours of vocal prayer we have uttered before God. Thus, by means of these processions in the open air, we show to God that homage and adoration of which, at other times, we have assured him in the interior of the temple. That vocal prayer is not neglected during the procession as an open fact, for prayer and the singing of hymns constantly occupy those who accompany the Blessed Sacrament. But granted, even, that the many distractions, incident to the procession, interfere with interior recollection, and that not all the prayers that are said have that fervor with which they are offered in the church ; yes, suppose even that some, throughout the entire time of the procession, do not say a single "Our Father" ; it still remains a truth that the mere accompanying of the Most Holy is an act of homage and veneration, and, consequently, a prayer.

Thomas—Very true ; but if this procession must take place, would it not be much better to have it within the walls of the church, where there would be less occasion for distraction, and where, consequently, the faithful might show their homage to God without disturbing prayer in the proper sense? How many non-Catholics witness this act of religion in the streets, to whom the whole affair seems ridiculous, and who, therefore, find it neither edifying for themselves nor contributing to the edification of others!

Pastor—My dear Thomas, there are those who, if they are called to the Church, tell us that we need no such temple built by the hands of men ; that God should be adored in the vast temple of God—Nature. And if we wish to transfer our worship beyond the narrow walls of the church into the great natural temple of God, they again tell us that it is unbecoming for us to venture beyond the church-door with our homage to God. While these men are at other times by no means over-zealous to avert shame and obloquy from the Church, they become suddenly most anxious lest she might suffer harm, as soon as we speak of showing our homage and devotion to our holy faith in the great temple of God—under the wide canopy of heaven. Take heed that you be not one of these. This celebration might, of course, be made within the temple, if it were not precisely the opponents of our faith who occasion our transferring it to the open air. As I have already said, by this solemn celebration outside of the walls of the church we purpose to give testimony to our faith. We may, during the entire year, show in the church that we are Catholics ; we do this before others who share with us our convictions ; hence we experience no difficulty in doing this ; but we must also show that we are prepared to confess our faith before those who differ from us, and before infidels, proving that we fear not, if need be, to endure mockery and contempt for the sake of Christ.

Thomas—Well, no doubt there are other means, besides this one, of confessing our faith. At our last conference you even mentioned the sign of the cross as such. The early Christians likewise had to make profession of the faith, and they had not these processions.

Pastor—Pardon me, Thomas, the early Christians did have processions, by means of which they confessed the faith ; and they were of a most grave and solemn character—we have none such to-day. I might even go back still farther, and remind you of that procession by which the Jewish

people introduced the Saviour into Jerusalem, when they went to meet him with branches of the olive and the palm, and hailed him with the cries of Hosanna! However, I speak only of the early Christians, and I have reference to those processions of the martyrs to the pagan tribunals, and from the tribunals to the prisons, and from the prisons to the place of execution, where, by the axe of the executioner, they shed their blood. Here, truly, there was opportunity enough, in the face of the gaping and mocking multitude, to confess the faith. But when at length the enemies of Christianity were sick of the butchery, because the more they slaughtered the more the number of Christians increased, then another kind of profession of faith had to be resorted to, because upon the new Christians, no less than upon the old, was this confession incumbent. The sign of the cross may indeed serve this purpose; but that belongs to daily usage, and is better suited as a means by which the individual Christian may proclaim his membership of the Church, than for the entire Church with it to give open and solemn testimony of her belief.

Thomas—That is certainly true.

Pastor—The dogma of the Real Presence, moreover, is that doctrine in which, of all others, the Catholic Church differs from her opponents, all of whom have denied this dogma. Therefore a solemn and public procession, held for the glorification of this holy mystery, is better adapted than anything else to give testimony of the faith of the entire Catholic Church. Everything in the procession on the Feast of Corpus Christi is calculated to realize this purpose. The temple built by the hands of man ceases to be a temple, for the entire earth is turned into a temple, and dedicated as such; its portals are opened, and the Prince of Peace goes forth surrounded by the jubilant multitude of his faithful followers. As of old in Jerusalem, so here too, boughs and branches and flowers mark the path along which he has

passed ; and as during his lifetime, so here also, he dispenses the fulness of his blessing. This is indicated by the Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament, given from the altars erected for this purpose. His people, his chosen Israel, accompany him, and rejoice in the privilege accorded them, through the mercy of the Lord, of possessing the true faith and of being permitted to profess it before the whole world. The procession is preceded by the cross, that sacred sign in which alone we should glory ; it is surrounded by banners which say to us : “ Behold ! the cross has conquered ; through it your Saviour has vanquished death and hell ; do you also so fight that you may become victors.” Hymns of praise and thanksgiving fill the air—emblems of the “ Holy, holy, holy ” sung without ceasing before the throne of the Lamb. Burning candles point to Christ, the true Light, whom we have in our midst, and to the living faith and burning love which we bear in our hearts towards this adorable sacrament ; and clouds of incense ascend to heaven as a type of our devotion.

Thomas—Viewed in this light, I will gladly confess that, since those bloody days when the Christians professed their faith under the axe of the executioner, there has been no confession of faith more magnificent, more solemn, and more inspiring than that which we make in these processions on the Feast of Corpus Christi.

Simon—While solving the doubts and answering the objections of Thomas, you have introduced an explanation of much that takes place at the procession. We owe you the more thanks for it, because we would have been compelled to ask you for information upon those points.

Pastor—The processions, and indeed many other things in the Catholic Church, would certainly appear in a different light, and be less misinterpreted than they are, if men would look upon these things, free from passion and prejudice, as they are in reality intended and observed by the Church. But we must not conceal from ourselves the fact that many

Catholics contribute in no small degree to these misunderstandings and false interpretations by their conduct. If large numbers fail to join in the celebration, either from indifference or from human respect, and the number taking part in the procession is but small, this cannot favorably impress the spectators who, in larger cities, usually throng the streets on this occasion; the enemies of our faith must necessarily come to the conclusion that it is not the honor and glory of God that is intended by this celebration, but merely a spectacle arranged for the gratification of the curious—a scene that men look at and then go their way.

Simon—It is certainly a bitter reproach if we have to acknowledge that we are ashamed of Christ.

Pastor—Who certainly was not ashamed of us; who, with the cross upon his shoulders, amid mockery and contumely, painfully climbed up Mount Calvary for us—a journey far more difficult than any we can ever make for his sake.

Now let me say a few words more concerning the manner in which the Church seeks to advance the veneration of the Blessed Sacrament independent of this procession. That the service on this day is remarkable for its grandeur and solemnity I have already mentioned. I must also draw your attention to the beautiful hymns which are sung at Mass and during the procession. But that which especially distinguishes the solemnity of the feast is the repeated exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on this day, and every day during the octave. At the solemn Mass, Benediction is given both before and after the Mass. Thus the Church wishes to impress deeply upon our minds that the Lord of all blessings dwells in our midst.—However, we are not content with setting apart only one day in the year for the adoration of the holy mystery of the altar, but, following a custom of the early Church, the Thursday of each week is dedicated to this object and to the memory of the institution of the Holy Eucharist.—Let us close our conference this evening

with the firm resolve to prove ourselves true and ardent adorers of this holy mystery; the more we shall strive worthily to honor and venerate it, the more surely shall we be in a condition worthily to receive the same. I alluded above to the hymns sung on the Feast of Corpus Christi. In order that you may read them at your leisure for your edification, and perhaps even memorize them, I will give you printed copies of them, as I did on a former occasion of the hymns on the Passion of the Lord. The first in order is taken from the Missal, and is sung at the Mass; the others are taken from the Breviary, or office-book of the priest.

The hymns which the good pastor had caused to be printed, and which he distributed among his people, were as follows:

LAUDA SION SALVATOREM.

Laud, O Sion ! thy salvation,
 Laud with hymns of exultation.
 Christ, thy King and Shepherd true.
 Bring him all the praise thou knowest;
 He is more than thou bestowest ;
 Never canst thou reach his due.

Special theme for glad thanksgiving
 Is the living and life-giving
 Bread to-day before thee set ;
 From his hands of old partaken,
 Now the new the old effaces,
 Truth away the shadow chases,
 Light dispels the gloom of night.

What he did, at supper seated,
 Christ ordained to be repeated,
 His memorial ne'er to cease;
 And his rule for guidance taking,
 Bread and wine we hallow, making
 Thus our sacrifice of peace.

Wondrous truth by Christians learned :
Bread into his flesh is turned,
 Into precious blood the wine.
Sight hath failed, nor thought conceiveth,
But a dauntless faith believeth,
 Resting on a power divine.

Whoso of this food partaketh
Rendeth not the Lord, nor breaketh;
 Christ is whole to all that taste.
Thousands are, as one, receivers;
One, as thousands of believers,
 Eats of Him who cannot waste.

Bad and good the feast are sharing;
Oh! what diverse dooms preparing—
 Endless death or endless life.
Life to these, to those damnation;
See how like participation
 Is with unlike issues rife.

When the Sacrament is broken,
Doubt not, but believe 'tis spoken,
That each severed outward token
 Doth the very whole contain.
Naught the precious gift divideth,
Breaking but the sign betideth;
Jesus still the same abideth,
 Still unbroken doth remain.

Lo, the Angels' Food is given
To the pilgrim who hath striven;
See the children's Bread from heaven,
 Which on dogs may ne'er be spent:
'Truth the ancient types fulfilling—
Isaac bound, a victim willing;
Paschal lamb its life-blood spilling;
 Manna to the fathers sent.

Very Bread, Good Shepherd, tend us;
Jesus, of thy love befriend us;
Thou refresh us, thou defend us,
Thine eternal goodness send us
 In the land of life to see.

Thou who all things canst and knowest,
 Who on earth such food bestowest,
 Grant us with thy saints, though lowest,
 Where the heavenly feast thou showest,
 Fellow-heirs and guests to be. *Amen.*

PANGE LINGUA.

Sing, my tongue, the Saviour's glory,
 Of his flesh the mystery sing ;
 Of the blood, all price exceeding,
 Shed by our immortal King,
 Destin'd, for the world's redemption,
 From a noble womb to spring.

Of a pure and spotless Virgin
 Born for us on earth below,
 He, as man with man conversing,
 Stay'd, the seeds of truth to sow ;
 Then he closed in solemn order
 Wondrously his life of woe.

On the night of that last supper,
 Seated with his chosen band,
 He, the paschal victim eating,
 First fulfils the law's command ;
 Then, as food to all his brethren,
 Gives himself with his own hand.

Word made flesh, the bread of nature
 By his word to flesh he turns ;
 Wine into his blood he changes :
 What though sense no change discerns ?
 Only be the heart in earnest,
 Faith her lesson quickly learns.

Down in adoration falling,
 Lo ! the Sacred Host we hail ;
 Lo ! o'er ancient forms departing,
 Newer rites of grace prevail ;
 Faith for all defects supplying
 Where the feeble senses fail.

To the everlasting Father,
And the Son, who reigns on high,
With the Holy Ghost, proceeding
Forth from each eternally,
Be salvation, honor, blessing,
Might, and endless majesty. *Amen.*

VERBUM SUPERNUM PRODIENS.

The heavenly Word proceeding forth,
Yet leaving not the Father's side,
Accomplishing his work on earth,
Had reached at length life's eventide.

By false disciple to be given
To foemen for his life athirst,
Himself, the very Bread of Heaven,
He gave to his disciples first.

He gave himself in either kind,
His precious Flesh, his precious Blood ;
In love's own fulness thus designed
Of the whole man to be the food.

By birth their fellow-man was he
Their meat when sitting at the board ,
He died, their Ransomer to be ;
He ever reigns, their great reward.

O saving victim, opening wide
The gate of heaven to man below,
Our foes press on from every side ;
Thine aid supply, thy strength bestow.

All thanks and praise to thee ascend
For evermore, blest One in three ;
Oh! grant us life that shall not end
In our true native land with thee. *Amen.*

ADORO TE DEVOTE.

Humbly I adore thee, hidden Deity,
 Who beneath these symbols art concealed from me :
 Wholly in submission thee my spirit hails,
 For in contemplating thee it wholly fails.

Sight, and touch, and taste may naught of thee discern,
 But the soul that hearkens can the mystery learn :
 I believe whatever God's own Son averred—
 Nothing can be truer than the Truth's own word.

On the cross thy Godhead only was concealed ;
 Here not e'en thy manhood is to sight revealed :
 But in both believing and confessing, Lord,
 Ask I what the dying thief of thee implored.

I do not, like Thomas, see thy wounds appear,
 But with him confess my Lord and God is here.
 Grant this faith in me may evermore increase,
 And my hope in thee, and love, may never cease.

O thrice-blest memorial of my dying Lord,
 This true Bread of Life doth life to man afford ;
 Grant, O Lord ! my soul may ever feed on thee,
 And thy taste; of all things, to it sweetest be.

Victim for thy people, Jesus, Lord and God,
 Cleanse me, wretched sinner, in thy precious blood—
 Blood whereof one drop for human kind outpoured
 Might from all transgression have the world restored.

Jesus, whom in this life veiled I behold,
 Grant what my soul thirsts for with desire untold ;
 Oh! may I, beholding thine unveiled grace,
 Rest in blissful vision of thine open face. *Amen.*

CHAPTER VIII.

The Minor Feasts of our Lord.

THE Feast of the Transfiguration, which is commemorated on the 6th of August, had occurred since the last conference. It happened to fall on a Sunday, and the pastor had drawn the attention of his flock to this feast in his sermon. The first request they made of him at the meeting of this evening was that he should give to them an explanation of this festival.

I will gladly do so (the pastor replied), for such was my intention. After having gone through the principal feasts of the ecclesiastical year, it becomes necessary now also to speak of the minor feasts of our Lord that are commemorated from time to time. You ought, at least, to understand what you celebrate. But you must permit me to begin at the beginning. I will, therefore, first speak of the Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord, celebrated on the eighth day after Christmas—the circumcision of the Lord having taken place on the eighth day after his birth.

Simon—That is New Year's day.

Pastor—It happens to coincide with the New Year's day of the secular year, and was, on that account, appointed as a festival day in the earliest times of Christianity. The Council of Tours, held in the year 570, speaks of it as having been long observed. On this and the two following days the pagans were wont to celebrate feasts in honor of their gods by acts of licentiousness and debauchery. The Christians, therefore, observed these days as days of prayer

and fasting, in order thus strictly to distinguish themselves from the pagans, and to guard themselves against taking part in their abominations. When paganism died out the Christians continued to observe this day—not, however, as a day of penance, but as a feast-day, because the celebration of this day was no longer attended with any danger for them. The commemoration of the circumcision of the Lord is an admonition to us not to be, as were formerly the Jews, of “uncircumcised hearts and ears, always resisting the Holy Ghost,” but to begin the new year in righteousness and a thorough change of heart. We may also regard the circumstance that on this day the adorable name of Jesus was given to the Saviour, as a most precious New Year’s gift; for, although we celebrated a week before the joyful event of the birth of the long-expected Messiah, it was on this day that he was first solemnly declared to be our Saviour and Redeemer—for this is what the name of Jesus signifies.

Simon—I believe there is a special feast celebrated in honor of the Holy Name of Jesus.

Pastor—The Feast of the Holy Name occurs on the second Sunday after Epiphany, and, no doubt, the pious wish, to honor as much as possible the name of the Saviour, was the occasion of its institution. In the name of Jesus, according to the words of the apostle, every knee shall bend; and hence, when we pronounce this holy name, we at least bow the head. If we are admonished by the apostle at all times outwardly to manifest our interior veneration for this holy name, it is certainly proper that we should do it in a particularly solemn manner on a special day. Hence this festival was celebrated centuries ago in many monasteries, with the approval of the Sovereign Pontiffs, until, in the year 1721, it was appointed a feast for general observance in the entire Church. Let every Christian on this day call to mind that in Jesus he has a Redeemer and Saviour, and let him endeavor to strengthen his hope and confidence in him. But not only

on this day, but at all times, let us have the name of Jesus in our hearts and upon our lips ; this holy name will afford us encouragement to virtue, comfort in affliction, courage in despondency, peace in anxiety, and will fill our souls with true horror and detestation of sin.

Sirion—I know of no more beautiful prayer than to address the Saviour with the sweet name of “ Jesus.”

Pastor—And there is no prayer better adapted to those moments when we are unable to say long prayers—for instance, in the time of severe illness.

Simon—And, again, there is no more powerful prayer. If we are tormented by sufferings and trials, the mere recollection of the Saviour, and the devout pronouncing of his name, can make new beings of us, and give us patience and submission. One needs to have been sick in order to know what comfort there is in this Holy Name. How beautiful, also, is the LITANY OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS !

Pastor—You are right. In it we are reminded, in detail, of all that our Saviour became for us, and of all the favors we may expect from him. We are first reminded of his divinity, and call him “ Son of the Living God, Splendor of the Father, King of Glory.” Then we recall his Incarnation by addressing him as the “ Son of the Virgin Mary” ; then we contemplate him both in his divine and human attributes ; we adore him as the “ Powerful God, Eternal Wisdom, Infinite Goodness, and the Father of the World to come,” and as the “ Obedient, the Patient, and the Meek Son of Man” ; we think of his love for us, and appeal to him as the “ Model of all Virtues, the Author of Life, Zealous for Souls,” as “ Our Refuge, Father of the Poor, Treasure of the Faithful, the Good Shepherd, the True Light, our Way and our Life” ; we recognize and acknowledge that without him there is nothing ; he is “ the Joy of Angels, the Master of the Apostles, the Strength of Martyrs, the Light of Confessors, the Purity of Virgins, and the Crown of all Saints.” After having by these

titles glorified the Saviour, we implore him to deliver us from all evil and sin, and the consequences of sin—namely, his wrath and eternal death ; we implore him not to permit us to neglect his holy inspirations, and to defend us against the snares of Satan. We beseech him, for the sake of all that he has done for us, to hear us. We beseech him, for the sake of his Incarnation and Nativity, his holy Life, his Agony and Passion, his Resurrection, Ascension, and eternal Glory, graciously to hear our prayers. And we beg him, finally, as the Lamb that has taken away the sins of the world, to spare us and be merciful to us.

Simon—From my allusion to the Litany of the Holy Name you have taken occasion to explain its whole contents, for which we feel most grateful. I see a beauty and sublimity in it now of which before I had no idea. In future I shall recite it with still greater pleasure, and, I hope, greater profit.

Pastor—Do this often, and with grateful and loving hearts, for we can never make an adequate return to our Saviour for his infinite goodness and mercy.

The order in which the festivals we are now considering follow, brings us to the FEAST OF THE FINDING OF THE HOLY CROSS, celebrated on the 3d of May.

Simon—On the 14th of September there is another feast of the Holy Cross, called the FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS. What connection is there between these two feasts, and what is their signification ?

Pastor—I will explain to you the object of both feasts. When the bloody persecutions of the Christians, which lasted for three hundred years, had at length ceased, the first Christian emperor, Constantine the Great, resolved to erect a magnificent church over the tomb of the Saviour. He wrote to Macarius, Bishop of Jerusalem, apprising him of his intention, and requested him to superintend the building of the church, “ which was to surpass in grandeur and

magnificence everything in the world." To Dracilian, the governor of the province, he gave orders to collect the most skilful artisans, to furnish the necessary funds, and send to Jerusalem the rarest marbles and most precious woods and ornaments that could be found. From the very earliest times the Christians had cherished a deep attachment and veneration for the spot upon which had taken place the awful tragedy of man's redemption, and they loved to visit it; but the pagans, in their hatred of Christianity, had done what they could to conceal the place where our Saviour was buried. They had heaped upon it a great quantity of stone and rubbish, and upon it, as well as upon the spot where the cross had stood, they erected statues of Jupiter and Venus, knowing that in this manner they could repel the Christians, who would not come thither to pay homage to Christ, lest they would seem to pay worship to marble idols representing false deities. Thus it was easy in the time of Constantine to discover these holy places, they having been marked by the pagans themselves, even against their will; and what had been done from a wicked motive and from hatred of the Christians, served now, after the times of confusion were over, to indicate with perfect certainty the place of the Passion, death, and burial of the Redeemer.

The instructions of the emperor were forthwith carried out; and to show to the world how much importance was attached to this undertaking, the pious mother of the emperor, Helena, though eighty years of age, herself went to Jerusalem to witness the erection of the grand basilica, and, by her zeal and munificence, to hasten its completion. Thus the words of the prophet Isaias concerning the tomb of the promised Messiah were fulfilled: "And his tomb shall be made glorious." The visit of the pious empress to Jerusalem inspired her with the desire to recover, if possible, the cross upon which the Saviour had shed his blood; and since it was customary among the Jews to bury upon the

spot of the execution, or near it, everything which was used in the execution of a criminal, no one could doubt the possibility of making the desired discovery. The search was accordingly begun, and, after long and laborious excavations, three crosses, the nails with which the Saviour was fixed to the cross, the spear, and the tablet with the inscription which Pilate had caused to be placed over the cross of Christ, were at length found. The only embarrassment was to know which of the three crosses was that of the Saviour. Macarius, the Bishop of Jerusalem, after having ordered public prayers that God might solve the doubt, conceived an idea—undoubtedly inspired from above—which was crowned with success. There was at the time in Jerusalem a noble matron, well known in the city, who was extremely ill—in fact, nearly at the point of death. The bishop, the empress, and a multitude of people repaired in procession to the house of the sick lady, carrying with them the crosses. The Bishop knelt at her bedside and offered up the following prayer: “O Almighty God! who hast deigned to save mankind through the death of thy Son upon the cross, and who hast enkindled in the heart of thy servant the ardent desire of recovering the cross upon which hung suspended the salvation of the world, vouchsafe also to make known to us, by an infallible sign, which of the three crosses was instrumental in the triumph of the Saviour, and permit that this woman, almost in the agony of death, be restored to life and health by the touch of the wood of the saving cross.” Upon this the sick woman was made to touch the crosses successively. The touch of the first and second was without any result; but as soon as she touched the third she was instantly cured, and was at once able to join the pious cortége, praising and glorifying God, who had deigned to show his power in her person. To commemorate this miraculous discovery of the cross the feast which we call the *Invention* or *Finding of the Cross* was instituted. Up to the close of the

seventh century this festival was celebrated on the 14th of September, under the title of the Exaltation of the Cross; but from this period it was transferred to the 3d of May and called the Feast of the Invention or Finding of the Cross. I will give you the reason of this change later.

Thomas—But may we rely upon this account? Is it not possibly also an invention?

Pastor—It was in the year 326 that the cross was discovered, and St. Cyril, born in Palestine, and who was Bishop of Jerusalem in 350, furnishes us this account. He died in the year 386, so that it is very probable that he lived in 326, and may possibly have been himself an eye-witness of this miraculous discovery. At all events there were those living who were eye-witnesses, and from whom he could obtain all information in regard to it. On the other hand, he could not have mentioned it in his writings if the account had not been true, for otherwise his own contemporaries would have accused him of falsehood. This event is also mentioned by Eusebius, who lived at the court of the Emperor Constantine; by Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, in Italy, born in the year 353; by Sulpicius Severus, a contemporary and friend of the last-named; by St. Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, born in the year 347; by Rufinus, born in 330 in Italy; by St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, born in 340; and by other authors, all of whom lived too near the period of which we speak to have been deceived by a mere legend.

Simon—What has become of the Holy Cross?

Pastor—The Empress Helena divided the sacred wood of the cross into several parts. The largest portion she caused to be mounted in silver, and deposited it in the basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, to be there preserved for posterity. Another part she sent to her son in Constantinople. A third part was sent to Rome and placed in the church called the *Church of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem*, which this holy woman had

erected, and where it is still preserved, and repeatedly exposed during the year for veneration. In 614 Chosroës, King of the Persians, at the head of a numerous army, took possession of Jerusalem. It is said that 80,000 Christians lost their lives on this occasion. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, after having been pillaged and profaned, was burned, together with the city. The Holy Cross, which, for safety, had been put into a case and sealed up by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, was carried away by the victors. The aged Patriarch Zacharias was also led away into captivity. Fourteen years afterwards, in 628, the Persians were completely vanquished by Heraclius, and compelled by the victorious emperor to restore the Holy Cross they had carried away with them. The case containing the Cross was found still unopened and the seals unbroken. The emperor brought this precious relic with him to Constantinople, where he made his entry in triumph. In the beginning of the spring of the following year, 629, he embarked to carry the Cross again to Jerusalem. He would carry it upon his own shoulders into the city with the utmost pomp, but suddenly stopped at its entrance, being unable to go forward. The Patriarch Zacharias, whom he had released from the captivity of the Persians and brought back with him, was walking by his side, and suggested to him that his pomp formed too great a contrast to the humility of Christ, when he bore his Cross through the streets of that city. "You," said he, "walk in your gaudy imperial robes; he was meanly clad. You have on your head a rich diadem, he a crown of thorns. You go with your shoes on; he walked barefoot." Hereupon the emperor laid aside his purple and his crown, put on mean clothes, went along barefoot with the procession, and devoutly replaced the cross where it stood before. Since the eighth century the recovery from the infidels of this precious instrument and memorial of our redemption has been commemorated on the 14th of September as the *Feast of the Exalta-*

tion of the Cross, and the commemoration of the Finding of the Cross was, as I have already said, transferred to the 3d of May.

Simon—Was the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, after its destruction by the Persians, not rebuilt?

Pastor—It was rebuilt by Modestus, who succeeded Zacharias as Patriarch of Jerusalem. It was destroyed a second time, in 1009, by the Mohammedans. Again reconstructed by the Greek Emperor Michael, of Paphlagonia, it was a third time destroyed by fire on the 12th of October, 1808, on which occasion the Holy Sepulchre was preserved in a truly miraculous manner. Over the crypt of the Holy Sepulchre there was built a chapel which stood directly under the cupola of the grand basilica which enclosed the chapel. When, in the course of the conflagration, the roof and cupola of the church gave way, the whole burning mass fell down upon the chapel, and it was thought that not only the chapel, but also the Sepulchre would be utterly consumed by the intense heat of the flames. In the roof of the chapel openings were made to allow the escape of the smoke arising from forty-four lamps which are kept constantly burning in the chapel. These openings gave free access to the flames, and yet, after removing the *débris*, both the chapel and the Sepulchre were found not to have sustained the least injury; not even the wooden door leading into the chapel had suffered any damage. In like manner the Calvary chapel of the Holy Cross, and the Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows—all of which, like the Holy Sepulchre, belong to the Catholics—were left intact, while the buildings belonging to schismatics were wholly destroyed. Even the Turks looked upon this event as a miracle. It seemed like a judgment of God in favor of the legitimate guardians of his tomb.

Simon.—Why, have any others besides Catholics part in the holy places?

Pastor—Yes, the schismatic Greeks and Armenians. The

vast monument which to-day covers the tomb of the Saviour, is in reality composed of three large temples—namely, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Church of Mount Calvary, and the Church of the Finding of the Cross, so that all the places memorable in the Passion and resurrection of Christ are covered by them. Each of these places is again enclosed within a chapel. The three main temples, originally constructed separately, remained disconnected for a long time ; during the time of the Crusades they were connected and brought under a common roof. The Greeks and Armenians are in possession of some of the holy places, and their jealousy of the Latin or Western Catholics prompted them to set fire to the main building in 1808, which resulted so disastrously for themselves.

Simon—I wish I could enjoy the happiness of visiting the holy places of Palestine.

Pastor—Such is also my great desire ; but as neither of us will probably ever be able to gratify this wish, I will tell you how we may be compensated for our loss, and if we are really in earnest, we may even gain as much profit for our souls as if we visited in person those places sanctified by the sufferings and death of the Saviour.

Simon—I do not understand you.

Pastor—Among the many Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land there were some who, not content with the happiness of visiting in person the places made dear by the sufferings of our Blessed Lord, transferred, if I may so speak, Mount Calvary to their own homes. In order that they might, in spirit, often revisit these memorable places, they erected in quiet groves, or upon the side of a hill, a number of crosses in imitation of the spots on Mount Calvary venerated for some incident in the Passion of our Lord. They then visited successively the places marked by the crosses, stopping for a short time to meditate upon the sufferings of the Redeemer. To aid their imagination, and the better to fix their minds

upon the subject of their contemplation, they frequently attached to these crosses pictures or paintings representing some scene in the Passion. This devotion was called "*The Way of the Cross*," and the pictures or representations were termed "*Stations*." From the thirteenth century the erection of the Stations of the Cross became general all over Europe. The Friars Minor of St. Francis of Assisi, to whom the care of the Holy Sepulchre and the other sacred places of Mount Calvary had been entrusted, introduced this devotion everywhere in their convents, and the multitude of the faithful, who flocked to their churches to perform the pious exercises of the Way of the Cross, prompted the bishops to erect the Stations likewise in the parochial churches. The Sovereign Pontiffs not only approved of this devotion, but, to stimulate the faithful still more to its performance, they enriched it with the indulgences granted to the visits to the Holy Land. The number of the Stations, as you know, is fourteen. I will name them to you in the order in which they follow :

1. Jesus is condemned to death by Pilate.
2. Jesus is laden with the cross.
3. Jesus falls under the weight of the cross.
4. Jesus meets his Mother.
5. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry the cross.
6. Veronica offers Jesus her head-cloth.
7. Jesus falls a second time under the cross.
8. Jesus comforts the women of Jerusalem.
9. Jesus falls a third time under the cross.
10. Jesus is stripped of his garments.
11. Jesus is nailed to the cross.
12. Jesus dies upon the cross.
13. Jesus is taken down from the cross.
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb.

In Rome the public performance of the "*Way of the Cross*" may be witnessed in the heart of the city, every Fri-

day afternoon, within the enclosure of the Amphitheatre or the Coliseum. This remarkable structure, within which, for centuries, thousands upon thousands of lives, both of men and of beasts, were cruelly sacrificed for the *amusement* of the pagan populace, and whose soil was drenched with the blood of the martyrs during the bloody persecutions of the Christians, has been consecrated by the Sovereign Pontiffs as a monument to the memory of the Christians who there shed their blood in testimony of the faith.* In the centre of the arena stands a simple wooden cross, and along the sides of the Amphitheatre fourteen chapels have been constructed containing representations of the Passion such as I described before. Hither every Friday afternoon pious confraternities come in a body to make the Way of the Cross. You see this is a simple manner of picturing to ourselves the painful way of our Saviour up Mount Calvary, and of accompanying him in spirit on the journey to his ignominious death. Besides, it is a devotion we can perform at any time ; for there is no Catholic church, however humble it may be, whose walls are not ornamented with the Stations.

There can certainly be no more salutary practice than the contemplation of the Passion of Christ. For who can still cherish hatred and enmity in his heart when he considers with what love the Saviour gave himself up for all ? How can deceit dwell in our breasts, and falsehood upon our lips, when false witnesses helped to condemn the Most Holy to ignominious death ? How can we indulge in ease and luxury when we behold Jesus hanging upon the hard wood of the cross ? How can any suffering or misfortune that God may send us, guilty ones, seem hard or intolerable, or how can we complain or murmur, when we see before us the in-

* One of the first acts of the Italian government, after the occupation of the city of Rome, was to remove from the Coliseum every vestige of Christianity, and to restore to it its ancient pagan character, ploughing up the sacred soil to search for pagan antiquities.

conceivable tortures endured by the guiltless Saviour? In short, how can we have the heart to commit another sin, seeing what sacrifice was necessary to expiate sin?

Simon—Truly, the frequent and attentive consideration of the sufferings of our Lord must change into a new man even the greatest sinner, if he be not utterly hardened.

Pastor—Hence the Church has taken every care that we shall not want for opportunities for such meditations. Besides the two Feasts of the Holy Cross of which I have spoken, there are still others which are intended to bring to our minds the Passion of our Lord.

Whilst the season of Lent is dedicated to the consideration of Christ's sufferings in general, all the Fridays, from Septuagesima Sunday to Passion Sunday, are set apart for the consideration of some special event in the Passion. These are : 1. The Prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Olives ; 2. The Most Sacred Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ ; 3. The Most Sacred Crown of Thorns of our Lord Jesus Christ ; 4. The Most Sacred Spear and Nails ; 5. The Sacred Winding-Sheet ; 6. The Five Holy Wounds ; and 7. The Precious Blood. Moreover, every Friday throughout the year is consecrated to the memory of the Passion, because it was on a Friday Christ suffered and died for us. In some places it is the custom to toll the church-bell at three o'clock on Friday afternoon, to remind the faithful of the hour of the death of the Saviour, and to exhort them to some prayer or pious ejaculation.

In his Passion and death Jesus particularly showed us the love which consumed his Sacred Heart for our salvation, and therefore we may here appropriately speak of the devotion and the FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS, celebrated on the Friday after the octave of the Feast of Corpus Christi.

Thomas—Was not the devotion to the Sacred Heart established in the Church in more recent times?

Pastor—The devotion to the Sacred Heart is as old as

Christianity itself. The foundation of this devotion was laid upon Mount Calvary when the Divine Heart of the Redeemer, pierced by the lance, was opened as an inviolable asylum of refuge for the faithful followers of Christ. "One of the soldiers opened his side with a spear" (John xix. 34). The Fathers, particularly St. Augustine, in explaining this passage, remark that the Evangelist made use of the word "opened" for a special reason, for otherwise it would have been more natural for him to have said: "One of the soldiers *pierced* his side." But the favorite disciple of Jesus, who, at the Last Supper, rested upon the bosom of his Divine Master, and was permitted to penetrate the mysteries of his Divine Heart, designedly used the expression, "One of the soldiers opened his side," to indicate that the side of the Saviour was opened for no other purpose than to afford us free access to his Divine Heart. Viewed in this light, the devotion to the Sacred Heart is nothing new. Still, the Church had existed for more than sixteen centuries before any special or marked honor was shown to the adorable Heart of Jesus. But in the seventeenth century, at a time when the love for God began to grow cold among men, and religious indifference was wide-spread, this Divine Heart was to become, in the designs of Providence, the object of a special devotion that was to extend over the whole Church.

Simon—How was this devotion established in the Church?

Pastor—For the accomplishment of the grandest works God frequently makes use of the weakest instruments, in order that, when apparently insurmountable obstacles are overcome, his co-operation may be made manifest to all. In 1675 there lived in the convent of the Visitation at Paray-le-Monial, in France, a pious nun named Margaret Mary Alacoque. Practising the most exact obedience, she renounced entirely her own will, and embraced that of God alone as manifested to her by her superiors. Her love for God was equalled only by her contempt for herself and for

all that was of the world. It was this soul, so pure, that God made choice of to establish the devotion to the Sacred Heart, and in the following manner : One day, during the octave of Corpus Christi, whilst she was engaged in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus Christ, her Beloved, suddenly appeared before her, and, uncovering his breast, showed her his Heart. This Divine Heart, enthroned, as it were, in flames, was surrounded by a crown of thorns, and the wound it had received was still open, while a cross, more brilliant than the sun, surmounted all. After permitting his servant to contemplate this spectacle for a time in silence, our Lord uttered these loving words : “ Behold this Heart, which so loves men as to spare itself in nothing, even exhausting itself and being consumed for the love of them. Yet, in return, I receive from the greater number only ingratitude, through the coldness and contempt they exhibit for me in the Sacrament of my love, or through the irreverences and sacrileges of which they are guilty ; and what wounds me more than all else is, that I am thus treated by hearts that are consecrated to me. It is my desire, therefore, that the first Friday after the octave of the Blessed Sacrament be observed in a special manner as the feast of my Heart, by offering a Communion, with a reparation of honor for all the insults and indignities which it has received since the institution of the Sacrament of the Altar. I promise that my Heart shall bestow its love abundantly on those who will render me this honor, or cause the same to be rendered me by others.”

That there might be no doubt concerning the divine origin of this devotion, God permitted it in the beginning to encounter the greatest obstacles and opposition ; but having received the approval of the Apostolic See, it soon spread with a success and rapidity that could only be attributed to divine interposition.

Simon—What is the object of this devotion ?

Pastor—The devotion of the Sacred Heart has for its aim, under the wounded and thorn-crowned Heart, to honor the infinite love of Jesus towards men, and to make reparation for the insults and outrages heaped upon him, especially in the mystery of his love—the adorable Eucharist—by heretics, infidels, and bad Catholics. I must remark here that nearly every devotion practised in the Church has a twofold aspect, the one material and visible, giving a title to the devotion; the other spiritual and invisible, which is the implicit object of the devotion. Thus, for example, in the devotion to the Five Wounds of our Lord, his wounded hands, and feet, and side are the exterior objects of our devotion, and give to the devotion its title; but it is the ardent love which caused him to suffer for us that is the *invisible* and *spiritual* object of our devotion. The same is true of the honors rendered by the Church to the instruments of the Passion, of which I spoke awhile ago. Now, in the devotion to the Sacred Heart the exterior or visible object is that Heart united to the person of the Divine Word made flesh. The spiritual and invisible object is the ardent and all-absorbing love of Jesus.

Thomas—But do we not thus “divide” Jesus Christ, contrary to the admonition of St. Paul?

Pastor—When we praise the voice of an able singer, or the hand of a skilful painter or sculptor, do we *divide* the persons whom we thus praise?

Thomas—By no means.

Pastor—We regard in a special manner the quality we speak of, but the praise redounds to the person of the individual whose skill we commend. The quality noticed has no existence independently of the person to whom it belongs, and it is impossible, therefore, to separate one from the other. In this sense only is the Sacred Heart of Jesus taken as the material object of the devotion of which we speak. As the heart of a man represents to us, in the ordinary way

of speaking, his sentiments, his virtues, his good qualities, his whole interior, so the adorable Heart of Jesus is a representation of all that is ineffable in the Godhead to which it is united. It symbolizes his whole interior, with his thoughts and acts: his patience, his humility, his zeal, his meekness—in a word, all his virtues. It is, to us, the source of all the spiritual goods we receive, the seat of those lofty desires entertained in regard to us, and of the hidden motives which prompt these desires. To rekindle and keep alive in the hearts of men the fire of divine love, which the Saviour came upon earth to spread everywhere, Jesus presents to us his Heart, and presents it under such a form that to withhold our love is impossible. The mysteries of his life, especially the sufferings he endured in his Passion and death; the humiliations to which he descends in order to conceal himself in the Sacrament of the Altar—all this is brought before our minds, as food for loving contemplation, in the devotion which has for its object the veneration of the Heart of Jesus.

Thomas—Does not this devotion rest on a rather uncertain basis, being founded upon private revelations made to a pious nun?

Pastor—You must not, Thomas, confound the occasion which gave rise to this devotion with the authority upon which it rests. A private revelation, it is true, gave origin to the devotion; but its approval is due to the Church, on whose infallible authority we receive it. This devotion rests its claim, not upon the authority of the pious religious to whom it was revealed (for we are not to be guided by the private judgment even of saints), but upon that of the Church. And as the Church is not subject to error, she cannot propose anything to us which is not contained in the deposit of truth. Scarcely had this devotion become known beyond the humble place of its origin, when the Church called it before her august tribunal, and, after a strict exam-

ination and full discussion, pronounced it just and holy. The Sovereign Pontiffs granted numerous indulgences to the pious associations or confraternities which were speedily formed, all over the world, in honor of the Sacred Heart, and in 1765 Pope Clement XIII. confirmed this holy devotion by an authentic approbation of a proper Office and Mass in honor of the adorable Heart, and permitted the celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart. But long before this devotion had been specially revealed, particularly favored souls in every age were permitted to penetrate its secrets and to enjoy the particular graces we now experience from this devotion. This may be seen from the writings of a St. Augustine, a St. Cyprian, a St. Cyril, a St. Bonaventure, a St. Gertrude, a St. Mech'ildis, a St. Catherine of Sienna, a St. Magdalen of Pazzi, and many others.

Simon—Really, we cannot be sufficiently thankful to our Lord for having, by means of his Church, deigned to place at the disposal of all those treasures which he formerly communicated only to a few favored souls.

Pastor—Before closing our conference this evening I must say a few words explanatory of the FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION. In this festival the Church commemorates the transfiguration of Christ upon Mount Thabor, in the presence of his apostles, Peter, James, and John, when his face shone as the sun, and his garments became white as snow, and Moses and Elias appeared talking to him, and a voice from the cloud was heard, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." What lends importance to this event is the solemn manner in which the Redeemer is acknowledged and declared to be the Son of God, in the presence of his specially chosen apostles. In hearing the account of this wonderful event we seem to hear the voice of the Heavenly Father saying: "Believe firmly in Christ, and follow him, for he is the true and living God." But it is not enough simply to rejoice in this manifestation

of the divinity of Christ, but we must also contribute, as far as we can, to his glorification. We can do this only by hearing the words of Christ and faithfully keeping his commandments. For in the virtuous life of every Christian the Saviour is as much glorified as he was upon Mount Thabor. Our hands will glorify him if they give alms to the needy ; our feet will glorify him if they are employed in the service of God and for the welfare of our neighbor ; and our tongues will contribute to his glory if, shunning deceit and falsehood, they are devoted to the praise of God, the defence of innocence, the comfort of the sorrowing, and the instruction of the ignorant and erring.

Simon—In a few days we celebrate the FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. Would you not have the goodness to tell us something about this feast ?

Pastor—As there are now no more feasts of our Lord to speak about, I propose, at our next meeting, to consider the feasts of the Blessed Virgin ; and in the course of our conference we shall have occasion to speak of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Until we meet again do not fail, in your life and actions, to glorify Christ as far as lies in your power, and he will also one day glorify you.

Several voices—Amen.

CHAPTER IX.

The Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

PASTOR—This evening, as I promised you, we shall speak of the feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Thomas—Of which, it seems to me, there are altogether too many. It was with difficulty I could pick them all out from the calendar.

Pastor—You are not tardy this evening in making your objections, Thomas. If you had, while counting up the number of feasts celebrated in honor of the Blessed Virgin, endeavored from one or the other of them to draw profit for your soul, you would have found so rich a treasure, that you would greatly wish for the frequent recurrence of these feasts, and you would not now quarrel about their number.

Thomas—It is true, at the moment I only thought of learning how many there are.

Pastor—And I fear at other times it did not give you great concern to learn how to celebrate them in the proper manner, for otherwise it would have been an easy matter for you to reconcile yourself to their number. The Catholic Church has, indeed, always sought particularly to further the honor and veneration of the Mother of God. Did not God choose the Virgin Mary from among all the daughters of Eve, that she might give birth to his Incarnate Son? How, then, can any one refuse to honor her whom God himself has honored in so marked a manner? And if, among all the children of man, God found none more worthy to receive the sublime dignity of Mother of God, how pure and

holy, and how worthy of reverence and veneration, must she have been whom he selected for this sublime office ! It was she who bestowed upon his sacred body the first cares, and for the services she rendered him we desire to show our gratitude. And, again, how greatly was she beloved by the Saviour himself, who was mindful of her even upon the cross, recommending her to the tender care of his favorite disciple ! How ready we find him to grant her prayers when she solicits favors for others ! His first miracle—that at the wedding of Cana—he wrought at her request. These are the reasons why the Church delights to see her children cherish love and devotion to the Blessed Virgin. And the Christians of old did not even wait to be called on to do so, but themselves asked that many opportunities might be afforded them to show their veneration for the Mother of their Lord. Thus it is that the feasts which we celebrate in her honor were gradually introduced.

Simon—And their celebration affords us no less joy than it did our forefathers.

Pastor—The feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary are the following : 1. THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, on the 8th of December. St. Augustine (Nat. et Grat., c. 36) says : “The honor of the Lord forbids to speak of the Blessed Virgin as having been infected with *any kind* of sin.” In harmony with these words of this illustrious Doctor of the Church, Christian tradition declares that she who was to bring forth the Saviour was free from every stain of original sin, even from the first moment of her conception.* This perfect purity and exemption of Mary from original sin we celebrate on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. While we give thanks to God for having shown such favor to the Mother of the Redeemer, we also beg him,

* On the 8th of December, 1854, the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary was declared an article of Catholic faith by Pope Pius IX. of blessed memory.

for the sake of Mary, to give us, who have entered this world stained with original sin, the grace to preserve unsullied the purity conferred upon us in the water of baptism. Are you familiar with the picture of the Blessed Virgin called the *Immaculate Conception*?

Simon—Oh! yes; I have a copy of it at home. The Virgin is represented standing upon a globe; her foot rests upon a serpent, and in her hand she holds a lily. At her feet there is the half-moon, and a crown of stars encircles her head.

Pastor—Your description is perfect. But can you also tell me the meaning of the various objects by which the Virgin is surrounded?

Simon—Hardly. The lily, I presume, indicates her purity.

Pastor—That is right. The fact that she was exempted from original sin by the grace of God, and that the tempter of Paradise never possessed any power over her, is expressed by the serpent, whose head she crushes under her heel. Because of her purity and sanctity she is raised far above all men, and as Queen of the earth she is represented standing upon a globe. The moon, ever changing—now growing, now diminishing—is at her feet, to show that she was above all earthly change, and free from all vacillation between good and evil. That her mind ever dwelt on high with God, and was occupied with him alone, is typified by the stars to which she lifts her eyes, and which, like a halo, surround her head to proclaim her sanctity.

Simon—How beautiful and how full of meaning! Now my picture is doubly dear to me.

Pastor—You may not only derive pleasure, but also much profit from your picture, Simon, if you strive to realize in yourself everything it expresses. You were not exempted, it is true, from original sin, but you were washed clean from it by holy baptism; hence it is now your duty to crush the head of the serpent, and never to give ear to the voice of

the tempter. It behooves us, therefore, not to allow ourselves to be deceived by his artful devices, and particularly to fly from sin when it seems to us most inviting. We must tightly grasp in our hand the lily—that is to say, carefully guard the purity and sanctity of our hearts; and, finally, we must lift our thoughts and desires above the stars, to God on high, and trample under foot the ever-changing goods of earth, deeming it beneath us, for their sake, to violate the will of our Heavenly Father. Our first mother, Eve, has left us a sorry example; let us as sedulously follow the example of the Blessed Virgin, shown in the picture, as we frequently have followed the example of Mother Eve, and listened to the voice of our enemy. By her conduct Mary has become the very opposite of Eve; as Mother of the Redeemer, she has brought us blessing and salvation, while Eve brought upon us dire malediction; hence, in a beautiful hymn of the Church, Mary is said to have reversed the name of “Eva,” so that it has become “Ave,” the Latin for “Hail.”

Simon—Please, Your Reverence, make us acquainted with this hymn.

Pastor—I shall be surprised if you are not already familiar with it. However, I will read it for you, and at some other time I will give it to you printed, together with other hymns to the Blessed Virgin. This is the text:

AVE MARIS STELLA.

Hail, thou star of ocean !
Portal of the sky !
Ever Virgin Mother
Of the Lord Most High !

Break the captive's fetters ;
Light on blindness pour ;
All our ills expelling,
Every bliss implore.

Oh ! by Gabriel's Ave
Uttered long ago,
Eva's name reversing,
'Stablish peace below.

Show thyself a mother ;
Offer Him our sighs
Who, for us incarnate,
Did not thee despise.

Virgin of all virgins !	Till with thee and Jesus
To thy shelter take us ;	We rejoice for ever.
Gentlest of the gentle !	
Chaste and gentle make us.	Through the highest heaven,
	To the Almighty Three,
Still as on we journey,	Father, Son, and Spirit,
Help our weak endeavor,	One same glory be. <i>Amen.</i>

Pastor—Let us now turn our attention to another festival of the Mother of God—namely :

THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN, celebrated on the 8th of September. We meet with this feast in some portions of the Church as early as the fifth century, and gradually its observance became universal. It is a special distinction of the Blessed Virgin that we commemorate the day of her nativity—a distinction conferred upon only one other saint in the Church, namely, St. John the Baptist. Though the latter was not exempt from original sin in the moment of his conception, yet the Scriptures tell us (Luke i. 15) that he was sanctified before his birth. The Church has always regarded it as unbecoming to commemorate in a festive manner the day on which a being, infected with original sin, beheld the light of day.

Thomas—But do we not celebrate our birthdays ?

Pastor—To celebrate our birthday is certainly neither in accordance with the spirit of the Church nor conformable to ancient Christian usage. The day of our natural birth—which was the day of the birth of a sinner into the world—does not deserve to be specially celebrated in a Christian family ; but it is eminently proper to commemorate the day of our spiritual birth, when, by baptism, we were cleansed from original sin, and to keep sacred the feast-day of the saint whose name was given us in holy baptism. Let us hold fast to this ancient Catholic custom, and let the day on which, by water and the Holy Ghost, we were born for heaven, be more precious to us than the day of our natural

birth. In doing this, we bear a beautiful evidence of our constant and grateful acknowledgment for the benefits conferred upon us by our Saviour in preference to so many of our fellow-beings, and we rejoice that we have been called to the grace of the redemption and the light of the Gospel.

Simon—Are the feast-days of the saints not their birth-days ?

Pastor—No ; on the contrary, the days of their death. For him who upon earth has been true and faithful to God, and has thus proved himself worthy of eternal reward, the day of his death is the most beautiful of his life, for on that day he enters into the true home of his Father. Hence we gladly celebrate these days, and rejoice that the saints have persevered unto the end ; we regard the days of their death as their birthdays to eternal life. Be solicitous, my friends, that your death may also be your birth into the kingdom of heaven.

Simon—May God grant it !

Pastor—Now let us continue. Besides the Feast of the Nativity, we also celebrate the—

FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME OF MARY. We love to hear the names of those who are dear to us ; how, then, could the name of “Mary,” with which we delight to address the Mother of God, and invoke her intercession, be indifferent to us ? This name has been made for ever glorious by her whom the angel saluted as “full of grace.” Justly, therefore, has “Mary” ever been a favorite name among Christians, and Catholics give it to their daughters with predilection, in order to place them under Mary’s special protection and encourage them to imitate her virtues.

Another feast of the Blessed Virgin, recalling to mind her youthful days, is—

THE FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, on the 21st of November. According to an ancient

tradition, the parents of the Blessed Virgin had promised, even before her birth, to dedicate her especially and exclusively to God. When she was three years old, therefore, they brought her to Jerusalem and left her, to the service of the Most High, in the Temple. In this we find an impressive admonition to dedicate ourselves, and all belonging to us, to the Lord, and to spend our lives exclusively in his service.

THE BETROTHAL OR ESPOUSAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN, on the 23d of January, reminds us, as the title already indicates, of the union which the Blessed Virgin formed with St. Joseph, and which was ever to remain a chaste and spotless one.

Now we come to a festival which we do not celebrate exclusively in honor of Mary, but also remember in a special manner our Divine Saviour—namely :

THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN, on the 25th of March. This feast recalls that precious moment, for which the just of the ancient covenant had sighed for ages, when the long-promised Redeemer was announced by the mouth of the angel, and Mary, overshadowed by the Holy Ghost, conceived the Only-begotten of the Father, to clothe him with our humanity. On this day we commemorate the first moment of the dawning redemption, and it seems to us proper ever to keep in remembrance this happy period, no less joyfully and gratefully, than it was eagerly wished for and expected in the ancient law. Hence we find the celebration of this happy event in the early times of Christianity. While the feasts I mentioned before have been introduced only within the last few centuries, the Feast of the Annunciation was observed all over the Church as early as 400 years after Christ. Indeed, the faithful were not content to commemorate the joyous event of the Incarnation only on one particular day in the year, but later they sought to call it to mind repeatedly every day.

Simon—By the ringing of the “Angelus-bell,” or the “Ave Maria,” no doubt.

Pastor—Precisely. By means of the “Angelus Domini,” or the Angelical Salutation, we constantly keep in grateful memory the mystery of the divine Incarnation ; and it is at the same time an admonition daily to honor the Mother of the Saviour for the sake of her Divine Son.

The God whom earth, and sea, and sky
Adore and laud and magnify,
Who o’er their threefold fabric reigns,
The Virgin’s spotless womb contains.

The God whose will by moon and sun,
And all things, in due course, is done,
Is borne upon a maiden’s breast,
By fullest heavenly grace possessed.

How blest that Mother, in whose shrine
The great Artificer Divine,
Whose hand contains the earth and sky,
Vouchsafed, as in his ark, to lie!

Blest in the message Gabriel brought,
Blest by the work the Spirit wrought ;
For whom the great desire of earth
Took human flesh and human birth.

All honor, laud, and glory be,
O Jesu, virgin-born, to thee!
All glory, as is ever meet,
To Father and to Paraclete. *Amen.*

These are the words of a beautiful hymn which the priests recite in the Divine Office on the feasts of the Blessed Virgin, and they tell us what it is that renders her so worthy of veneration in our eyes, and of which the repeated saying of the “Angelus Domini” is to remind us. At first this prayer was only said in the evening, when a sign was given with the bell to exhort the faithful to repeat it. To stimu-

late the people to its devout recital, Pope John XXII. endowed it with a special indulgence. Subsequently it became a general custom to recite this beautiful prayer three times a day—morning, noon, and night—and other pontiffs have enriched it with additional indulgences.

Besides calling to mind the mystery of the Incarnation, to which we owe our redemption, the devout recital of the “*Angelus Domini*” has another great advantage. By it the daily labors of the Christian are repeatedly interrupted, and, in a manner, seasoned and interwoven with prayer. Nothing is so important—indeed, necessary—for us, as often to raise up our minds to the supernatural and eternal. Without this we will soon lose sight of our souls, and labor only for our bodies, and live as if we were to remain upon this earth for ever, and had no better world to look for. But when the husbandman is engaged in his fields, or the mechanic toils in the workshop, and their minds are filled only with thoughts of temporal gain and profit, the sound of the *Angelus*-bell summons them, like a messenger from above, to forget for a moment their worldly concerns, and to make room in their souls for some thought of God and eternity. Strive, my dear friends, always to say the “*Angelus*” with devotion and attention, in order that this short prayer may truly sanctify your daily labors, and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin obtain for you rich graces from God. Then may we hope to see realized the petition we send forth to her in the Vesper anthem sung during Advent time:

ALMA REDEMPTORIS.

Mother of Christ, hear thou thy people's cry,
Star of the deep and Portal of the sky!
Mother of Him who thee from nothing made,
Sinking, we strive, and call to thee for aid.
Oh ! by that joy which Gabriel brought to thee,
Thou, Virgin first and last, let us thy mercy see.

Another feast of the Blessed Virgin, having some connection with the one we have just spoken of, is—

THE FEAST OF THE VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN, on the 2d of July. This festival commemorates the visit of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth, in the mountains of Judea, immediately after receiving the message of the angel that she had been chosen to become the mother of the Lord. This feast has been celebrated in the Church now for about six hundred years. You are aware, I am sure, that in our daily prayers to the Blessed Virgin we repeat the words spoken by the angel to Mary, as well as those with which Elizabeth saluted her on the occasion of her visit.

Simon—Oh ! yes ; that is done in the “ Hail Mary.”

Pastor—And, no doubt, you can also tell me the words spoken by the angel and those spoken by St. Elizabeth.

Simon—The words of the angel are : “ Hail, Mary, full of grace ; the Lord is with thee ” ; and those of St. Elizabeth : “ Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb ”—

Pastor—So far. The name of Jesus, though known to Mary, was unknown to Elizabeth at the time of the visit of the former, and was afterwards added by the faithful. Thus, you see, we borrow the words of an angel with which to salute and honor the Mother of the Lord, and Elizabeth, the highly favored of God, comes to our aid. We are wont to call this short prayer the “ Angelical Salutation,” and it is such indeed, and deserves to be pronounced with the fervor and purity of an angel.

Simon—But there are still other words in the “ Hail Mary.” which you have not yet mentioned.

Pastor—The words to which you refer contain a short prayer imploring the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. They were first added to the “ Hail Mary ” by pious Christians, and, having been afterwards approved by the Church, they came into general use.

Thomas—I once read that the Virgin Mary had children by St. Joseph after the birth of the Saviour.

Pastor—This is simply an outrage heaped upon the Virgin Mother of Jesus, which justly arouses the indignation of every truly Christian heart ; and I am surprised, Thomas, that you could bring yourself to repeat it in this assembly. Mary so much respected the vow of virginity she had made, that she would rather forego the dignity of Mother of God than sacrifice her virginity. And the apostles, who are certainly credible witnesses on this point, style her “*Virgin*” in their Creed : “*born of the Virgin Mary.*”

Thomas—But still the Scriptures say that Jesus had brothers.

Pastor—Among the Hebrews it was customary to call those near akin brothers and sisters. Now, James, and Joseph, and Jude, and Simon, who in the Gospel are called the brethren of Jesus, were the sons of Mary, the wife of Cleophas ; and she was called “*sister*,”—that is, near kinswoman—of the Blessed Virgin, and hence her sons were called the “*brethren*” of Jesus. St. Matthew (xxvii. 56) and St. Mark (xv. 40) both tell us that among the women present at the death of the Saviour was *Mary, the mother of James and Joseph*, and St. John (xix. 25) says that the Mary who stood at the foot of the cross was the *sister* of the Mother of Jesus, and *the wife of Cleophas* ; so that James and Joseph, called in the Gospel brethren of Jesus, were not the children of the Blessed Virgin, but of Mary, her kinswoman, the wife of Cleophas.

To return again to the feasts. We have to mention—

THE FEAST OF THE EXPECTATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN, on the 18th of December. It is celebrated a few days before Christmas, to remind us that the birth of the Saviour is nigh, and is an additional admonition worthily to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord. These are the feasts of the Blessed Virgin, which, according to the events they

commemorate, belong to the period before the Nativity of the Lord.

Joseph—Are all these days celebrated like the Sundays and other great feast-days?

Pastor—No, my child. On nearly every day in the year the Church celebrates some feast, either of the Saviour, or of the Blessed Virgin, or of some saint. These days are not all days of rest, but on most of them the faithful may and ought to follow their avocations. Those whose business and circumstances permit will do well not only on such days, but every day, to assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; but there is no obligation to do so. There are certain festivals, considered more important, which are celebrated with special solemnity, and on which, like on Sunday, the faithful are *obliged* to hear Mass, and, if possible, to abstain from servile work. These festivals are called *feast-days of obligation*. Their number is not the same everywhere, owing to peculiar circumstances in certain countries and localities.*

Simon—Of the feasts of Our Lady, which, according to the events they commemorate, follow the Nativity of the Saviour, the first in order, I presume, is—

THE FEAST OF THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN, on the 2d of February.

Pastor—That is the first. I have already spoken, on another occasion, of a ceremony peculiar to this festival—namely, of the Blessing of the Candles. This feast began to be gene-

* In the United States there are six feasts of obligation—namely:

1. The Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord, 25th of December;
2. Circumcision of Our Lord, 1st of January;
3. Ascension of Our Lord, fortieth day after Easter;
4. Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, 15th of August;
5. All Saints' Day, 1st of November;
6. Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, 8th of December.

rally observed about five hundred years after Christ. The intention of the feast is to bring to our minds the coming to the Temple of the Blessed Virgin, there to make the offering required by the Mosaic law. According to this law, every woman, after child-birth, was regarded as unclean—for seven days if her child was a male, and for two weeks if it was a female ; besides this, she was not permitted to appear in the Temple until after the expiration of thirty-three days if she had given birth to a son, and sixty-six days if her child was a daughter. At the expiration of this time she was required to appear in the Temple to offer a year-old lamb for a holocaust, and a young pigeon or a turtle-dove for a sin-offering. If she was too poor to offer a lamb she could substitute therefor a pair of pigeons or turtle-doves. The woman who had given birth to a child was held to be unclean, to denote the impurity of man's origin by his being conceived and born in sin. The Mosaic ordinance regarding child-birth was calculated to keep before the minds of the people the terrible curse which came upon the entire human race in consequence of the fall of man.

Simon—But the Blessed Virgin had conceived of the Holy Ghost ; how could she be subject to this law ?

Pastor—She was not, indeed, subject to it, having remained a virgin even after the birth of the Saviour ; but she submitted to this law from humility. According to another ordinance of the Mosaic law (Exod. xiii. 2), every first-born son of Israel was to be dedicated to the service of the Lord. But instead of all the first-born, the Lord chose the tribe of Levi for his special service. However, as an acknowledgment of his right to the first-born, he ordained that every first-born son should be presented in the Temple—that is to say, be offered and consecrated to him—and afterwards be ransomed from the service of the altar by seven shekels of silver. In compliance with this law Mary presented her Divine Son in the Temple on this day, and thirty-three years afterwards she

offered him on Mount Calvary to his Heavenly Father as a sacrifice for the ransom of mankind.

Simon—Is not the ceremony of the blessing of women after child-birth, in the Catholic Church, the same as the purification of women in the old law ?

Pastor—It is an imitation of that ceremony, but it has not the same object. A Christian mother that has given birth to a child needs no purification, Christianity knowing no other uncleanness than sin ; neither is there any offering necessary for her child, who has been washed clean by the waters of baptism and ransomed by the blood of the Redeemer. The object of the blessing is, solemnly to introduce the Christian mother into the church, now that she is once more able to assist at divine worship. It is an honor shown to her who, in Christian wedlock, has helped to augment the number of the true faithful ; and therefore it is denied to those who, forgetful of the obligation to bring up their offspring in the true faith, consent to have their children baptized or reared outside of the Catholic Church. On entering the church the mother receives the blessing of the priest, and, in his person, the congratulations, as it were, of the entire Christian congregation. On her part she is to return thanks for her happy delivery, and for the increase of the number of the citizens of the kingdom of God ; and, while offering up to God her child, she at the same time asks for grace to enable her faithfully to discharge her duty towards it, and to bring it up for God and for heaven. Hence it is highly inconsistent when mothers request that this ceremony be performed at their homes, because there it loses all sense and meaning.

Simon—This request is made, no doubt, because some imagine that all sorts of harm may befall them as long as they have not received this blessing, or have not been *churched*, as this ceremony is sometimes called.

Pastor—I am not unacquainted with the reason, and I

cannot but pronounce it sinful superstition. The Christian that guards against sin, confides in God, and shields himself with the sign of the cross, has nothing in the world to fear. How far the Church is removed from believing that any particular danger menaces the mother before the ceremony of churching, and how improper it is to perform the ceremony anywhere but in church, is sufficiently shown by the prayers themselves that are used in this sacred function. The woman that desires to be churchied kneels down at the door or entry of the church, holding a lighted candle in her hand, and the priest sprinkles her first with holy water, and then says: "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." After this he recites the following anthem: "This woman shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and mercy from God her Saviour; for this is the generation of them that seek the Lord." This anthem is followed by the twenty-third Psalm, after which the priest stretches out to her hand the end of his stole, saying: "Come into the temple of God, adore the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who has given to thee to be fruitful in thy offspring." Then she kneels before the altar, giving thanks to God for the benefits bestowed upon her, while the priest prays as follows: "Almighty and everlasting God, who, by the Blessed Virgin Mary's happy delivery, hast changed into joy the pains of the faithful in their child-bearing, mercifully look down upon this thy servant, who comes with joy to thy holy temple to return thee thanks; and grant that after this life she may, by the merits and intercession of the same Blessed Mary, deserve to be received with her child into the joys of everlasting happiness, through Christ our Lord. Amen." Then the priest sprinkles her again with holy water in the form of a cross, saying: "May the peace and blessing of Almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, come down upon thee and remain with thee for ever. Amen." Thus, in this prayer the mother is reminded to thank God.

the giver of every gift, for the increase of her offspring, and is, at the same time, called upon not to content herself with the mere natural birth, but to make of her child, which by baptism belongs to God, a true servant of the heavenly King and an heir of his eternal kingdom.

As it is already quite late, we shall have to defer the consideration of the remaining feasts of Our Lady for another evening. Permit me to close the conference of to-day with the blessing with which the priest terminates the ceremony which has just engaged our attention: "May the peace and blessing of Almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, descend upon you and remain with you for ever."

Many voices—Amen.

CHAPTER X.

The Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary—(continued).

A SHORT time after the last conference the worthy pastor wrote out the melodies of the hymns which he had previously distributed at the meetings, together with a few others, and gave them to several of his parishioners who had some knowledge of music. These at once set about practising them and teaching them to others. Considering the short time that remained for this purpose before the next conference, the pastor was not a little surprised, when approaching the meeting-place on the appointed evening, to hear his good people singing one of those hymns. It was a translation of the—

SALVE REGINA.

Mother of Mercy, hail, O gentle Queen !
Our life, our sweetness, and our hope, all hail !
Children of Eve,
To thee we cry from our sad banishment ;
To thee we send our sighs,
Weeping and mourning in this tearful vale.
Come, then, our Advocate ;
Oh ! turn on us those pitying eyes of thine,
And, our long exile past,
Show us at last
Jesus, of thy pure womb the fruit divine,
O Virgin Mary, Mother blest !
O sweetest, gentlest, holiest !

The pastor could not help commending, not only their zeal

in learning the hymn, but also the correctness and precision with which it had been sung.

Thomas—I do not think it right if, in hymns and prayers to the Blessed Virgin and other saints, words and expressions are used which imply that they can aid us by their own power, and not merely by their intercession.

Pastor—It is the belief and conviction of every Catholic that the saints can only *intercede* for us with God, and cannot help us by their own power or will, and that their prayers for us are always conditional—namely, if it should seem good to the wisdom of God to grant their request.

Thomas—But it is not so stated in these hymns. For instance, in one of the hymns you distributed before, the following lines occur :

“Eva’s name reversing,
 ’Stablish peace below.”
 “Break the captive’s fetters,
 Light on blindness pour.”
 “Chaste and gentle make us.”

Now, it is not said that she should do this through her intercession.

Pastor—But is it not sufficient if we understand it in this sense? What would you think of me, Thomas, if, desiring to invite you to dine with me, I were to say to you : “Walk to my house with your feet, open the door with your hands, then sit down to my table, take up a knife and fork, and with your mouth eat dinner with me”?

Joseph—I would say that all these different motions or actions are understood without expressing them.

Thomas—But then all these sorts of expressions are so easily misunderstood by non-Catholics, and expose us to their reproaches.

Pastor—Any one, having the earnest desire, can easily inform himself of the teachings of the Catholic Church. Now.

when we pray, we pray in accordance with the teachings of *our* faith, and the words which we use in our prayers are taken in the sense in which the Catholic Church takes them. If we sought, while at prayer, to avoid every word or expression which ignorance or malice might possibly misinterpret, I fear we would bestow very little attention or devotion upon our prayers. As well might one ask of us, when in the bosom of our families, never to utter a word, however well intended it might be, without having first carefully considered whether a stranger, if he were present, might not possibly misinterpret it.

Thomas having no further objections to offer, the good pastor continued :

The festival next in order is—

THE FEAST OF THE SEVEN DOLORS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN, commemorated on the Friday in Passion Week. In contemplating the sufferings of Christ the Church could not overlook the sufferings and the compassion of his holy Mother—the Mother “of the Man of Sorrows.” To perpetuate the memory of these sorrows she has instituted this festival, and has given to it the title of the “Seven Dolours,” because of the seven principal sorrows which Mary experienced during her life—namely: 1. At the circumcision of her Divine Son ; 2. At her flight with the child into Egypt ; 3. When for three days she sought the child Jesus, on their visit to Jerusalem ; 4. When she beheld Jesus laden with the cross ; 5. When she saw him expiring upon the cross ; 6. When he was taken down from the cross ; and 7. When his sacred body was laid in the tomb. To express the idea or intention of this feast, we often see the sorrowing Mother of Jesus represented with a sword (sometimes seven swords) piercing her heart, in accordance with the prophetic words of the aged Simeon, addressed to Mary when she presented her Divine Child in the Temple: “ Behold, this Child is set for the ruin and for the resurrection of many : . . . and thy own

soul a sword shall pierce." When those who are dear to us are stricken with grief and affliction, the love we bear them urges us to show our compassion ; and nothing is more soothing and grateful to the sorrowing heart than true sympathy. Now, if we truly love the Mother of our Saviour, we cannot but feel an earnest desire to express to her our compassion in her anguish, particularly when we consider that it was for our sins that her Divine Son endured all those tortures which, like a sword, lacerated her loving maternal heart. It was sympathy and compassion with Mary that prompted the commemoration of her sorrows.

Simon—Truly, Our Lady merits more than any other woman the title of "Mother of Sorrows."

Pastor—And therefore she is a model and comfort not only for grief-stricken mothers, but for all who are in sorrow and affliction. For if God would not permit her to pass through life without draining to the dregs the bitter cup of grief, whom he loved so dearly, and who, of all his creatures, was the only one worthy to be his mother, how can we, guilty sinners, murmur and complain when he sends us trials and visitations to purify us like gold in the furnace? The measure of Mary's sorrow was filled to overflowing when she stood at the foot of the cross and offered to the offended justice of God the precious life of her Divine Son. Hence the Church puts into her mouth the words of the prophet : "O all ye that pass by the way ! look and see whether there be any sorrow equal to my sorrow, whom the Lord hath bowed down in his day of wrath." Indeed—

"Is there one who would not weep,
'Whelmed in miseries so deep
Christ's dear Mother to behold?
Can the human heart refrain
From partaking in her pain,
In that Mother's pain untold?"

You are, no doubt, familiar with that beautiful and touch-

ing hymn, the “*Stabat Mater*,” in which the Church so feelingly expresses her sympathy with Mary in her profound sorrow. Though it is to be found in nearly every prayer-book, I will give you a printed copy of it:

STABAT MATER.

At the cross her station keeping,
 Stood the mournful Mother weeping,
 Close to Jesus to the last.
 Through her heart, his sorrows sharing,
 All his bitter anguish bearing,
 Now at length the sword had passed.

Oh! how sad and sore distressed
 Was that Mother highly blest
 Of the sole-begotten One!
 Christ above in torment hangs;
 She beneath beholds the pangs
 Of her dying, glorious Son?

Is there one who would not weep,
 'Whelmed in miseries so deep
 Christ's dear Mother to behold?
 Can the human heart refrain
 From partaking in her pain,
 In that Mother's pain untold?

Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled,
 She beheld her tender Child
 All with bloody scourges rent;
 For the sins of his own nation
 Saw him hang in desolation
 Till his spirit forth he sent.

O thou Mother, fount of love!
 Touch my spirit from above,
 Make my heart with thine accord;
 Make me feel as thou hast felt;
 Make my soul to glow and melt
 With the love of Christ my Lord.

Holy Mother! pierce me through;
In my heart each wound renew
Of my Saviour crucified;
Let me share with thee his pain,
Who for all my sins was slain,
Who for me in torments died.

Let me mingle tears with thee,
Mourning him who mourned for me,
All the days that I may live;
By the cross with thee to stay,
There with thee to weep and pray,
Is all I ask of thee to give.

Virgin of all virgins blest !
Listen to my fond request:
Let me share thy grief divine;
Let me to my latest breath
In my body bear the death
Of that dying Son of thine.

Wounded with his every wound,
Steep my soul till it hath swooned
In his very blood away;
Be to me, O Virgin! nigh,
Lest in flames I burn and die,
In his awful judgment-day.

Christ, when thou shalt call me hence,
Be thy Mother my defence,
Be thy cross my victory;
While my body here decays,
May my soul thy goodness praise,
Safe in Paradise with thee.

We now come to

THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN,
celebrated on the 15th of August. Having shown to Mary
our compassion in her sorrows, it is meet that we should also
take part in her joys and her glory. To do this we do not,

however, wait for this particular festival. The anthem which we sing in her praise from Easter to Trinity Sunday sufficiently testifies that we also rejoice with her at the resurrection of her Divine Son. The words of this anthem are as follows :

REGINA CÆLI.

Joy to thee, O Queen of heaven! Alleluia ;
He whom thou wast meet to bear, Alleluia,
As he promised, hath arisen, Alleluia.
Pour for us to him thy prayer, Alleluia.

But the day of unalloyed joy and glory for Mary is the day of her assumption into heaven, celebrated on the 15th of August. It is a pious belief, coming down to us by tradition from the earliest times of Christianity, that the body of the Blessed Virgin was raised by God, soon after her death, and assumed to glory, by a singular privilege, before the general resurrection of the dead.

• *Thomas*—Must we believe this ?

Pastor—It is not an article of faith which you must believe under pain of sin ; but it would certainly be presumptuous *not* to accept with deference an opinion which has always received the favor of the Church from the earliest times. It is, besides, perfectly conformable to the sentiments of piety and veneration which we owe to the glorious Mother of God. The preservation from corruption, and the speedy assumption to glory, was a privilege which seems justly due to that sacred body which was never defiled by any sin, and which was preserved from the common curse of mankind ; to that body from which the Eternal Word received his own adorable flesh, by whose hands he was pleased to be tended and cared for on earth, and whom he vouchsafed to obey and honor as his mother. Whether this opinion be true or not, it in no manner affects the object of this festi-

val. We celebrate on this day the departure of the Blessed Virgin from this vale of tears to take possession of those joys which God had prepared for her.

Simon—Is it known where the Blessed Virgin died?

Pastor—Some think she went with St. John to Ephesus, and died there; but this opinion seems to be grounded only on conjecture. It seems more probable that she died in Jerusalem. St. Willibald, who flourished in 740, in his voyage to Jerusalem, was shown the tomb of the Blessed Virgin, which was empty, in the valley of Josaphat, at the foot of Mount Olivet. Adamnan, the Irish monk, who visited Palestine at the close of the seventh century, and Bede, mention it in the same place. As soon as the days of bloody persecution were passed, the Christians began to celebrate the memory of the death of the Blessed Virgin. At first it was commemorated on the 18th of January; but from 582 we find the day celebrated on the 15th of August. The Epistle in the Mass of this day begins with these words: "In all these I sought rest, and I shall abide in the inheritance of the Lord" (Ecclus. xxiv. 11); and the Gospel of the day ends as follows: "Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke x. 42). This sounds to us like a cry of joy and exultation from heaven, and we rejoice at the thought that the purest and the holiest of the human race now dwells in eternal glory, and that she is now for ever united with her Divine Son, whom she brought forth and laid in the manger, whom she nurtured, whose ignominy and tortures she shared at the foot of the cross, and whose resurrection was her comfort and her joy. We are transported in spirit to the realms of bliss, and behold her exalted above the highest cherubim, and placed on a throne above all the choirs of the blessed spirits; and we also think of our own true home, where one day we hope to be united with the blessed of heaven in extolling and praising the mercies of God shown to Mary. At the same time we remember

how much she must love us, whom her Divine Son loved even unto death, and, full of confidence, we approach her to ask her prayers and intercession ; we salute her as “Queen of Angels,” “Queen of Saints,” and after each glorious title we add, “Pray for us.”

Simon—You were kind enough, Your Reverence, to give us an explanation of the Litany of the Saints and of the Holy Name of Jesus ; we would be very grateful if you would also explain to us the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. There is much in this litany which is not very clear to me. What is the meaning of the word “litany,” and why is the Litany of the Blessed Virgin sometimes called “Litany of Loretto”?

Pastor—The word “litany” comes from the Greek and means “supplication.” The name of “Loretto” is no doubt given to this litany because it was first publicly recited in the Church of the Blessed Virgin in the city of Loretto, in Italy. In this, as in all other litanies, we first of all send up a cry of supplication to the Tri-une God, imploring his mercy. We address our prayers to God, even if we intend in them to ask for the intercession of the saints. We begin the litany with the cry of supplication : “Lord have mercy on us ; Christ have mercy on us ; Lord have mercy on us.” We implore the mercy of the Most Holy Trinity by the words, “God the Father of Heaven, God the Son, Redeemer of the world, God the Holy Ghost, have mercy on us.” In these supplications we confess ourselves needy, sinful men, and beg to be cleansed before we presume to utter our prayer. By the repeated cry of “Lord have mercy on us,” we desire to give expression to the consciousness of our deep guilt, and to our earnest longing for the Divine Redeemer. Hence we especially call upon the Divine Son, our mediator, with the exclamation: “Christ hear us !”—that is, hear our cry ; and “Christ graciously hear us !”—grant us what we ask. This introduction is common to all the litanies.

Simon—After this we begin to invoke the Blessed Virgin.

Pastor—After having humbled ourselves in profound adoration before the Most Holy Trinity, we now address ourselves to her whose intercession we invoke. For we never forget that the adoration which we owe to God must ever precede the veneration we pay to his saints. St. Epiphanius says : “To Mary be honor, but adoration to God.” Therefore we appeal to him who has the power to show us mercy and grant us grace, with the cry, *Have mercy on us* ; while we do not implore mercy of the Blessed Virgin, but only beg for her intercession—*Pray for us*. First we invoke the Blessed Virgin by her sweet name :

HOLY MARY—a name full of joy and comfort for the Christian, and sanctified by the greeting of the angel, and by the mouth of the Saviour, who doubtlessly often pronounced it. Then we recall her sublime dignity :

HOLY MOTHER OF GOD—the highest dignity that could be conferred upon any daughter of Eve. The whole mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption is expressed in this one word—as was announced by the angel : “Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son ; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High ; and the Lord shall give unto him the throne of David his father, and he shall reign in the house of David for ever” (Luke i. 31, 32). If Mary is the Mother of the Son of the Most High, then Christ is true God ; and if she has given birth to God, then Christ is also true man. Now, the divinity and humanity of Christ is the foundation of our faith ; and we confess our faith in the God-man by calling Mary the Mother of God. When, in the fifth century, Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, who had fallen into grave errors, denied in a sermon that Mary was the Mother of God, the people rose in the church and contradicted him, notwithstanding that he was their bishop. Another still more illustrious example was given by the Christians of Ephesus. In the year 431 a council of

the Church was held in that city, to condemn and suppress the error of Nestorius. Early in the morning the people of the city assembled around the church in which the council was held, and awaited with anxiety the decision of the bishops. When at length it was announced, in the evening, that Nestorius was deposed, his error condemned, and the honor of the Mother of God vindicated, the people broke out in loud exultation. The bishops were greeted by the jubilant multitude, as if they were angels sent from heaven, and were accompanied to their dwellings with flaming torches. The most distinguished and prominent citizens of Ephesus led the solemn cortége. Matrons and maidens, distinguished by rank and birth, carried before the bishops vases of gold and silver, in which the most costly Oriental frankincense was burned. The entire city was illuminated, and all the streets resounded with the praise of God, the eulogy of Mary, and grateful blessings on the bishops. Thus the people of Ephesus sought to express the gratitude which they thought was due to those who had vindicated and secured the name of Mother of God to the Blessed Virgin.

Simon—This example ought to stimulate us to vie with those who defended the honor and dignity of Mary with so much zeal and fervor.

Pastor—The title of Mother of God is followed by another of deep significance. We next call Mary :

VIRGIN OF VIRGINS.—The state of virginity has ever been held in high esteem by the Catholic Church. St. Paul earnestly recommends this state in his first epistle to the Corinthians, in the seventh chapter. St. Cyprian, a Father of the Church, who lived about two hundred years after Christ, calls virginal purity a sister of the angels, because a chaste virgin is an angel in the flesh. If, then, every true Christian virgin is to be greatly esteemed for her purity, how great must be our veneration for her who by many privileges was raised above all others ! If the Son of

God had to assume human nature from the womb of a virgin, because his holiness forbade that he should be sullied with the sin of Adam, it was also necessary, for the same reason, that he should be born of the purest among all creatures—namely, of Mary, the Virgin of Virgins. Moreover, the Sacred Scriptures (Luke i. 34) tell us that Mary had chosen the state of virginity for her whole life. She was the first of her race who had made the vow of life-long chastity, and she has given to all, coming after her, an example of the most perfect purity. Imitating the early Christians, we love to call her by the name expressing the angelic virtue of purity—we call her **THE** Virgin of Virgins *by excellence*.

Simon—It is truly beautiful that we have remained faithful, even up to the present day, to the ancient Christian custom of calling Mary “the Blessed Virgin.”

Pastor—What is the next title by which we address Our Lady?

Simon—**MOTHER OF DIVINE GRACE.**

Pastor—Correct. The angel, at the command of God, greets Mary with the words: “Hail! full of grace.” These are not empty or meaningless words when spoken by a heavenly messenger. The angel tells her that she is *full* of grace, and therefore had found favor with God. Having borne in her chaste womb Jesus, the source and fountain of all grace and sanctity, she must also have possessed in an eminent degree those graces and virtues which made her worthy of such a distinction. It is precisely these virtues which constitute the greatness of Mary. Her prerogative of Mother of God would have served her but little if she had borne the Divine Word only in her womb, without at the same time guarding it in her heart.—The Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas, says that Mary was full of grace not only for herself, but also for all men. Having brought forth Christ, the fountain of all grace, she opened this fountain to mankind. Hence we may justly call Mary the Mother of

Divine Grace, and, with the Church, apply to her the words of Eternal Wisdom (Ecclus. xxiv. 24): "I am the mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope. In me is all grace of the way and of the truth; in me is all hope of life and of virtue."

The pastor seemed to reflect for a moment upon what title followed next; but one of those present had already drawn forth a book from his pocket, and read aloud:

MOTHER MOST PURE; MOTHER MOST CHASTE; MOTHER INVIOULATE; MOTHER UNDEFILED.

Pastor—We may combine these four titles. After having considered Mary as the Mother of God, and the Virgin of all virgins, our attention is drawn to the mysterious union of these two attributes. "A virgin conceives, a virgin brings forth, and remains a virgin," says St. Augustine. To shield her virginity against even the breath of suspicion, Christ gave to her from the cross his virgin disciple, St. John, as a son. And so firm has the faith in her perpetual virginity ever been in the Church, that St. Basil (in the fourth century) says: "The ears of the faithful would not endure it, if any one were to assert that Mary had ever ceased to be a virgin." It is of this inviolability of the Blessed Virgin that the Church would remind us when she compares her to the bush of Moses, which, burning, was not consumed; and other similar comparisons. Please continue to read.

Simon, who had in the meanwhile obtained possession of the book, continued:

MOTHER MOST AMIABLE; MOTHER MOST ADMIRABLE; MOTHER OF OUR CREATOR; MOTHER OF OUR SAVIOUR.

Pastor—The spiritual beauty of a pure soul is far more sublime and lovely than the beauty of the body, which, perishable as it is, we often praise beyond merit. Hence the spiritual beauty which we admire in Mary gives occasion to the words: "Mother most amiable." Therefore, also, the Church applies to Mary the words of the Canticle: "Thou

art all fair, O Mary ! and there is no stain in thee." This same idea is also expressed in the anthem to the Blessed Virgin, sung from the Feast of the Purification to Easter, and which reads as follows :

AVE REGINA CÆLORUM.

Hail, O Queen of Heaven enthroned !
Hail, by angels mistress own'd.
Root of Jesse ! Gate of morn !
Whence the world's true Light was born ;
Glorious Virgin, joy to thee,
Loveliest whom in heaven they see ;
Fairest thou, where all are fair !
Plead with Christ our sins to spare.

We might call her "most admirable," if we had in view only the purity of her life ; but besides this she is, as an ancient writer says, "the means of the union of the divine and human nature of the Saviour ; she is maid and mother, virgin and heaven ; she is the ladder by which God came down to men upon earth " (Proclus Cyzic.) Hence we love to salute her as the "Mother of her and our Creator," the "Mother of her and our Saviour." For he who has made heaven and earth out of nothing, has become man to save the world, and has chosen one of his creatures to become his mother. And the Mother of the Creator is the Mother of the Saviour.

Simon—VIRGIN MOST PRUDENT ! VIRGIN MOST VENERABLE ! VIRGIN MOST RENOWNED ! VIRGIN MOST POWERFUL ! VIRGIN MOST MERCIFUL ! VIRGIN MOST FAITHFUL !

Pastor—After having considered Mary as the Divine Mother, a new series of eulogies begins, in which her virginity is again extolled. We call her "Virgin most prudent." Now, if the fear of God and humility are, as the Holy Ghost tells us, the beginning of all wisdom, who can doubt that Mary possessed this wisdom in the highest degree ? "Virgin most venerable." How venerable must she appear in our

eyes, when we consider that God, who cannot be deceived by outward appearances, found her, among all his creatures, worthy of the most intimate union with himself! Hence we may justly call her “Virgin most renowned,” and place unbounded confidence in the intercession of the “Virgin most powerful.” Why should God not hear the prayers of her whom he himself has so highly honored? If God so favored his apostles that not the imposition of their hands only, but even their shadows healed the sick, with what power must he have endowed the intercession of his Mother! Believing in this power, we also trust in her readiness, by her prayers, to help us, and therefore appeal to her as the “Virgin most merciful.” While on earth, at the wedding of Cana, she took an interest in the temporal wants and embarrassments of men, and, unsolicited, presented them to her Divine Son; how could she now, placed near the throne of the Redeemer, treat with indifference our necessities and distresses, when we ask for her prayers, and when our requests concern not matters of this earthly life, but our fate for all eternity? Finally, she who proved herself the “Virgin most faithful,” at the foot of the cross, when most of the disciples had fled, and who, despite her unspeakable sorrow and the ignominy surrounding her, persevered there unto the end of the awful tragedy, will she not also prove faithful and persevering in her intercession, when grace and salvation is to be implored for those redeemed by the blood of her Divine Son Jesus?—May these manifold titles conferred upon the Mother of the Lord, as often as you pronounce them, animate and encourage you to invoke her aid with increased confidence!

Simon—They are truly calculated to inspire one with confidence. I believed that I fully understood these invocations of the Blessed Virgin, and I had, indeed, a fair idea of them, but I did not realize that, when attentively considered, they would be found so full of rich and deep signification. In

future I shall recite the Litany of Loretto with increased devotion and edification!

Thomas—I confess this litany has not heretofore found much favor in my eyes, having once read some very severe criticisms upon it; but as you have just explained it I could learn to love it. However, it is only in that part of the litany which still remains, that occur those expressions that sound so strange, and to which I could least of all reconcile myself.

Simon—I have never fully understood the invocations which now follow, and it was particularly on account of these singular terms that I asked for an explanation; therefore I am the more grateful to you for having fully explained what precedes them, and I feel satisfied that what follows is no less rich in beautiful and edifying significance.

Pastor—The invocations which now follow are figurative expressions, but all have a beautiful and deep meaning. They are terms for the most part taken from the Holy Scripture, and applied to the Blessed Virgin. Continue to read, Simon.

Simon—MIRROR OF JUSTICE! SEAT OF WISDOM! CAUSE OF OUR JOY!

Pastor—The Holy Scriptures and the Church call him *just* who co-operates with the grace of God, in order to grow in all virtues, sanctify himself in this life, and merit eternal happiness in the life to come. But where is the saint that could not find in Mary a model of virtue, and a bright, inspiring example for imitation, a “Mirror” of a truly righteous life? True righteousness is also true wisdom, and, having praised Mary as the Virgin most prudent, we now call her the “Seat of Wisdom.” Eternal Wisdom had chosen her as his throne and habitation, and in her we glorify him whom we adore as Eternal Justice. We call her “the Cause of our Joy,” because in his Mother God has honored and glorified the entire human race. God has planted her

in his Church, like the olive-tree from which the dove of Noe plucked the olive-branch—the emblem of peace—and we cannot mention her name, without thinking of the Redeemer of the world, and of the peace with God which he brought upon earth. If we cannot think without sorrow of the transgression of Eve, how can we think of her without joy who has given us the Redeemer and Saviour ?

Simon—SPIRITUAL VESSEL ! VESSEL OF HONOR ! VESSEL OF SINGULAR DEVOTION !

Pastor—We do not content ourselves with simply showing honor to that holy mystery in which the Son of God gives to us his sacred flesh and blood ; for the sake of this holy Sacrament we even honor the vessels in which the same is consecrated or preserved. If the metal is worthy of respectful veneration, on account of the sacred mystery to which it is dedicated, how incomparably greater must be the honor we show to her whom God has chosen from among all his creatures as his habitation on earth ? And why should we not esteem it the highest title of honor that we can confer upon Mary, to call her the chosen instrument, the vessel, as it were, of those graces which God would dispense to fallen mankind for its restoration ? She, who is so near to the Most High, and so intimately united with him, cannot, surely, be wanting in that devotion with which the blessed spirits are filled at the throne of the Almighty. Listen to the words of exultation in which she breaks forth : “ Magnificat anima mea Dominum ”—“ My soul doth magnify the Lord ; and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.” These words will give to us an insight into the rich treasure of glowing devotion which dwells in her soul. Therefore we honor her as a spiritual vessel, filled with holy prayer and fervent, ardent devotion ; and while invoking her, we feel confident that, by her intercession, she will obtain also for us from God the spirit of true and fervent prayer.

Simon—MYSTICAL ROSE ! TOWER OF DAVID ! TOWER OF IVORY !

Pastor—When the time for the coming of the Saviour was arrived, then were fulfilled in the Jewish people the words of the prophet Isaiah : “Upon the soil of my people there grow but thorns and thistles.” But from the midst of these thorns and briars there sprouted forth in admirable beauty the “Flower of the Root of Jesse”—the delightfully fragrant rose, “Mary.” The Church could not have presented to us under a more charming figure this highly-favored Virgin, who could say of herself : “I was exalted like a palm-tree in Cades, and as a rose-plant in Jericho” (Ecclus. xxiv. 18). In the litany we call to mind this figure, and praise Mary as the Queen of Flowers, who in beauty and fragrance is surpassed by none—as the “spiritual, mystical Rose” of the human race. And in this spiritual beauty she rises above all mortals like a tower ; and as towers serve to adorn cities and palaces, the family of David, from which she had sprung, and the entire Christian family, is adorned by none so gloriously as by Mary, the Saviour alone excepted. For the same reason we call her a “Tower of Ivory.” St. Peter Damian says : “Ivory is specially adapted for fine artistic ornamentation, and is therefore highly prized ; it is susceptible of a most wonderful polish, and is distinguished for its strength. But what can equal the lustre of that virginity which the inhabitants of the heavenly kingdom longed to behold ? What can exceed the strength of that virgin whom God chose as an instrument to overthrow the power of hell ?” Please continue.

Simon—HOUSE OF GOLD ! ARK OF THE COVENANT !

Pastor—These titles are also taken from the Old Testament, which informs us that the interior of the temple of Jerusalem was almost wholly covered with gold. Inasmuch as gold is the most precious of metals, it serves here as a type of divine grace, with which the Blessed Virgin was clothed by the

Lord. "The Lord is with thee ; thou art full of grace," were the words of the angel. Thus the heavenly King adorned more brilliantly than with gold that temple into which he deigned to descend and there dwell. Now, I need scarcely tell you why Mary is compared to the "Ark of the Covenant." The ark which stood in the temple of Jerusalem contained the tables of the Mosaic law; while in Mary the Divine Law-giver himself would dwell. In commemoration of the exodus out of Egypt, the rod of Aaron and a sample of the manna from the desert were likewise preserved in the ark ; but in Mary He assumed human nature, who would be our guide and our food—the Way, the Truth, and the Life for all of us.

Simon—GATE OF HEAVEN !

Pastor—What title could more suitably express the dignity of Mary than the title "Gate of Heaven" ? Did not the King and Lord of Heaven take from her our humanity, in order by her, as by a gate that separated heaven from earth, to enter into human life ? Through the Saviour the kingdom of heaven, which had vanished from the earth in consequence of the sin of our first parents, again returned to the earth.—But Mary will also be for us a gate of heaven if in our prayers we implore her intercession, for she will then present our petitions at the throne of our Heavenly Father and Saviour. Hence we often call her our mediatrix with God ; not as attributing to her the mediation between the Father and us, accomplished by the Saviour, but because she is the medium to obtain for us God's favors. She will, finally, become a gate of heaven for us if we imitate her shining virtues, and, by this imitation, attain to the possession and enjoyment of eternal glory.

Simon—MORNING-STAR !

Pastor—Like a dark and dismal night the curse of God, provoked by the sin of the first man and woman, rested upon the earth. But as the morning-star and morning-twilight

precedes the day, so Mary appeared, to herald the Light that was to enlighten the world. She is the Morning-star in the midst of the spiritual twilight which appeared before the advent of the Saviour; she is the Aurora upon which followed, nay, out of which was born, the eternal Sun of Justice.—Continue.

Simon—Now follow titles of which at least we understand the words. I am happy and thankful to have learned the meaning of the different names we give to Mary.

Thomas—And I, too, am now more reconciled to these expressions; but I scarcely think that one should be blamed for being scandalized by them, as they are not understood.

Pastor—Well, I do not think it strange that you should not have admired or loved that of which you had not yet learned the sense and meaning; but it is certainly very unjust and hasty to pass an unfavorable judgment upon things, to understand which one has never given one's self any real trouble. Let us continue.

Simon—HEALTH OF THE WEAK! REFUGE OF SINNERS! COMFORTRESS OF THE AFFLICTED! HELP OF CHRISTIANS!

Pastor—In the remaining part of the litany we recall to mind what Mary is for us in our earthly pilgrimage, and what she is for the blessed inhabitants of heaven. Restoration of the health of body and soul, comfort in affliction, and help in distress, this is what we mainly need in this vale of tears, and what we expect to obtain through the intercession of the Mother of God. In the words of the litany which you have just read, we imitate our forefathers in the Christian faith, who had recourse to Mary in all their wants and needs. Whatever we would ask of her in our other prayers, is pretty much contained in these few words. Now, we have only to speak of those eulogies which, like the Feast of her Assumption, represent to us her glory, and remind us of what she is to the blessed in heaven. Read those titles

Simon—QUEEN OF ANGELS ! QUEEN OF PATRIARCHS !
 QUEEN OF PROPHETS ! QUEEN OF THE APOSTLES ! QUEEN
 OF MARTYRS ! QUEEN OF CONFESSORS ! QUEEN OF VIR-
 GINS ! QUEEN OF ALL SAINTS !

Pastor—Well, then, learn the reason why we call Mary the Queen of Angels, from the lips of St. Bernard. He says: “Will not she who had God for a son be raised above all the choirs of the angels? Does not Mary call the God and Lord of Angels her son? And is not he, whom the angels serve, and to whom the powers and principalities are subject, himself subject to Mary? Why should not the heavenly spirits joyfully honor her whom the Son of God has chosen as an instrument for the redemption of mankind?” She is furthermore called “Queen of Patriarchs.” Who could with better right lay claim to the title of mother of the human race than the Mother of God, who, in her Divine Son, gave to the world the new spiritual life? We call her the “Queen of Prophets.” She was truly a prophetess when in the sublime canticle “Magnificat” she exclaimed: “Henceforth all nations shall call me blessed.” Was it not she of whom the prophet Isaiah said: “Behold a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son, and his name is ‘God with us’”? Was it not she for whom all the prophets looked with earnest longing, that of her might be born the Redeemer of the human race? She is called the Queen of Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, and Virgins. The Saviour had gathered his twelve apostles around him, that they might become the instruments for dispensing his graces and disseminating his teachings; but before them he had called ONE, not, indeed, that she might announce his truths to the world, and dispense his graces, but that she might give earthly being to the Eternal Truth and the Lord of Grace himself. Mary could truly repeat the words of St. John (1 John i. 1): “I have seen with my own eyes, and my hands have handled the Word of Life.” Whom could we, with better right, call a

Queen of Martyrs, than her who stood at the foot of the cross, and in her maternal heart suffered all the ignominies and tortures of her Son? If the sufferings of the martyrs derive their worth and their merit from the union of their sufferings with those of Christ, whose sufferings have been more intimately united with the sufferings of Jesus than those of Mary? We call confessors those blessed servants of God who have not suffered martyrdom, and have not shed their blood for the truths of the Gospel, but who, with the solicitude of faithful servants, have done the will of their Master, and by righteous and exemplary lives have gained for themselves crowns of immortality. After having considered the shining virtues of the Blessed Virgin, I need not tell you how she is, in this connection, a model for all the confessors of Christ, and how she has proved herself a queen and mistress of all. Still less have I cause to remind you of how she, the Virgin of virgins, has merited the title of "Queen of Virgins." In conclusion, we praise her as the "Queen of all Saints," and call to mind the renown and glory she enjoys among the heavenly hosts. Let us, too, my friends, in union with the angels and archangels, the apostles and martyrs, and all the citizens of the heavenly kingdom, glorify and honor the Saint of all saints as our Queen. Out of her regal treasure, so rich in sublime virtues, and so precious, because of the power of her intercession, let us ask and receive favors for time and eternity.

Simon—Amen!

Pastor—As in the other litanies, we now likewise turn to Him who has said of himself: "Behold, I am the beginning and the end." Having invoked the intercession of our holy Mother, we feel assured of her assistance, and, united with her, we implore the Lord of Hosts to hear us for his Mother's sake, and to show us mercy. We remind him of the infinite sacrifice which he offered to reconcile the world with his Heavenly Father: "Lamb of God, who takest away the sins

of the world," for the sake of the redemption, which thou hast accomplished for all, and therefore also for us, spare us, hear us, have mercy on us.

The assembly had followed these explanations with great attention, and it was evident that they were most anxious to acquire a complete understanding of a form of prayer of which they made such frequent use. It was on this account that the pastor devoted so much time to its explanation; and though the conference had been prolonged considerably beyond its usual hour, the same lively interest was shown by the assembly to the end.

CHAPTER XI.

Feasts of the Blessed Virgin—(continued).

AT the next meeting Simon said : Pardon me, Your Reverence, for troubling you with a question immediately in the beginning of our conference. It concerns a matter that came to our minds after you had gone away on the previous evening. Why is Saturday especially consecrated to the honor of the Blessed Virgin?

Pastor—The custom of dedicating Saturday to the honor of Mary is so ancient, that we are unable to fix the period of its introduction. We read in the life of St. Ildefonsus, who lived in Spain in the seventh century, that it was his habit to dedicate Saturday to the memory of the Blessed Virgin. Enlightened writers have assigned, as a reason for this observance, the fact that the relation between the Old and the New Law was but a type of the relation of Mary to Christ. As the old dispensation contained within it the germ of the new, and in the fulness of time brought forth the latter as its fruit, so Mary bore and brought forth Christ—the author of the new dispensation—as the fruit of her chaste womb. In the Ancient Law the seventh day of the week was the Sabbath, or resting-day of the Creator, while in the New Law the Sabbath of Christ—the Redeemer—is the Sunday, having in a manner gone forth from the Sabbath of the Creator ; hence it was thought meet to dedicate the seventh day, Saturday, to the honor of Mary, from whom Christ, the Redeemer, went forth.

The same sentiment which induced the servants of Mary

to consecrate to her one day in every week, and to honor her three times a day, also inspired them with the idea of consecrating to her an entire month, and they selected for this purpose the fairest and most charming of the year—the month of May. The devotion known as the month of Mary originated in Italy about the middle of the last century, when impiety and irreligion was working sad ruin among the people. The secular “May festivals,” harmless in themselves, had become the occasions of riot and sinful excesses. To counteract these evils, some devout clients of the Queen of Heaven united in consecrating to her this beautiful month. They adorned her statue with beautiful plants and fragrant flowers, and daily gathered around it to implore, through the powerful intercession of their “Queen,” the mercy of God upon the blinded children of the world. This devotion was hailed with great joy by the faithful, and soon spread over the entire Church.

Simon—What is the object of this devotion?

Pastor—The first object of this devotion is to return thanks to God for the graces bestowed upon the Blessed Virgin, and, by the contemplation of her virtues, to animate us to imitate her bright example.—Another object of the pious exercises of this month of Mary is, by her powerful mediation, to obtain from God some special favor for ourselves or others.

A few of the minor festivals of Our Lady still remain for our consideration. They are :

1. *The Feast of the Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel*, also called the *Feast of the Scapular*, on the 16th of July. The prophets of old loved to retire to Mount Carmel, that they might there in solitude commune with the Lord in prayer and contemplation. Soon after the cessation of the persecution of the Christians, the wildernesses of the forests and the solitudes of the deserts in the East began to be peopled by thousands of men, desirous of putting into practice the coun-

sels of perfection given by the Saviour three centuries before. Here under the direction of some venerable old man, whose long life had been spent in the desert, they led lives of privation and austerity. Such a body of men inhabited Mount Carmel, and were known as the hermits of Mount Carmel ; they cherished a particular devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and celebrated a special feast in her honor. In 1205 some English Crusaders, returning from the Holy Land, brought with them several of these religious from Mount Carmel to England, where they established a monastery. Twenty years before their arrival, one Simon Stock had retired to the forest near where the Carmelites established themselves, and had there practised the austerities of the hermits of the East. When he saw the devotion of the Carmelites to the Blessed Virgin, he at once asked to be admitted into the order ; which request was readily granted. Towards the end of his long life (he attained a hundred years) he received from Our Lady a sensible proof of her love and regard—a favor he had implored of her for many years. One day she appeared to him surrounded by blessed spirits, with a scapular in her hand, which she placed over his shoulder, as an external mark of the special servants of Mary. This scapular is a garment pending front and back from the shoulders (whence its name), and constitutes a part of the habit of the Carmelites. To unite the devout clients of the Blessed Virgin, living in the world, in certain exercises of religion and piety, St. Simon Stock, when he had been placed at the head of his order, instituted the Confraternity of the Scapular, the members of which wear a small scapular in imitation of that worn by the religious. The enrolment into the confraternity makes the members sharers in all the spiritual works of whatever kind, which everywhere are performed by day and by night, by the religious of the Carmelite Order.

2. *Dedication of St. Mary ad Nives*, on the 5th of August. This is the feast of the dedication of the principal church in

Rome consecrated to the honor of the Mother of God. It was built and richly endowed by a wealthy Roman patrician and his wife, who, having no heirs, desired to dedicate all their wealth to the Blessed Virgin. Popular tradition says that, upon the earnest prayers of this pious couple to Our Lady, to make known to them in what manner most pleasing to her their wish might be carried out, snow fell in the night of the 5th of August, and that the Blessed Virgin appeared to them the same night in a vision, expressing the wish to have a church built and dedicated to her holy name upon the spot which they should find covered with snow. The next morning a part of the Esquiline Hill was white with snow. From this miracle it is called the Church of Mary *ad nives*, or "at the snow." But it is better known by the title of St. Mary Major, because it is, both in antiquity and dignity, the first of the churches placed under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin. Sometimes it is also called St. Mary of the Manger, from the holy crib or manger of Bethlehem, which is here preserved.

3. THE FEAST OF MARY OF MERCY, OR OF THE REDEMPTION OF CAPTIVES, on the 24th of September. About the beginning of the thirteenth century, in consequence of the long wars with the Saracens, a very great number of Christians had been carried off into the most degrading slavery, and, by hard and cruel treatment, were often in danger of apostatizing from the faith of their fathers. Moved by compassion for these unhappy captives, St. Felix of Valois and John of Matha conceived the idea of forming an order whose members were to devote their time and energies, and, if need be, their liberty, for the ransom of the Christians held in cruel bondage. The name given to the institution was the Order of the Most Holy Trinity for the Redemption of Captives. Another order, with the same object, was founded by St. Peter Nolasco, under the title of the Order of Mercy, and placed under the special patronage of

the Blessed Virgin. The members of these orders devoted themselves to obtaining alms and donations with which to purchase the freedom of the unhappy captives, and not unfrequently remained themselves in slavery for the ransom of their brethren. To return thanks to God for the great blessings conferred upon Christianity through the sacrifices of these holy men under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin, the above feast was established by the Church.

4. THE FEAST OR SOLEMNITY OF THE ROSARY, on the first Sunday in October. This feast was first celebrated in the churches of the Order of the Preachers, whose founder, St. Dominic, instituted this devotion. In thanksgiving for the miraculous victory gained over the Turks in the naval battle of Lepanto, on the 7th of October, 1571, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, implored with special fervor in the devotion of the Rosary, St. Pius V., instituted an annual commemoration on the first Sunday in October, under the title of St. Mary of the Victory. His successor in 1573 changed its title to that of the Rosary: and Pope Clement XII., in 1716, made the observance of the feast general.

Simon—What is the origin of the Rosary?

Pastor—The ancient hermits, and others, frequently counted the number of their prayers by little stones, grains, or other marks. In the eleventh century the Abbott John Gualbertus directed those of his monastery who were not priests, and who could not read the Latin Psalter, to say a certain number of "Our Fathers" and "Hail Marys" instead of each canonical hour of the Divine Office. But the Rosary in its present form, consisting of fifteen decades, or tens of "Hail Marys," and one "Our Father" before each decade, in honor of the principal mysteries in the life, and Passion, and glory of the Redeemer, is due to St. Dominic. This illustrious saint had undertaken to check the fearful spread of the heresy of the Albigenses, who had completely overrun the south of France and the adjoining parts of Italy, and to

win them back to the true faith. This sect of blasphemers sought to undermine the very foundation of Christianity by denying the mystery of the Incarnation, and consequently the redemption of mankind. The efforts of St. Dominic remained fruitless, despite his eloquence and gift of miracles with which God had favored him. At length the Blessed Virgin appeared to him one day, when, almost in despair, he was fervently invoking her aid. She presented the Rosary to him, and thus addressed him: "Know, my son, that the Angelical Salutation was the means employed by the Most Holy Trinity for the regeneration of the world. This prayer is the foundation of the New Alliance. Do you wish to gain for God these hardened hearts? Preach it, then, according to the form I have taught you." Dominic faithfully carried out the instructions of Mary, and the most astonishing results immediately followed his preaching. The people were converted, and both faith and piety flourished with renewed vigor.

Thomas—I cannot easily reconcile myself to the form of devotion called the Rosary. Of what use can this ceaseless repetition of the "Hail Mary" be? I remember once reading that it is just as ridiculous to greet Mary three hundred and fifty times with the same salutation, as it would be to wish a person, on meeting him on the street, "good-morning" fifty times in succession, and that it must be annoying to the Blessed Virgin to hear this frequent repetition of the "Hail Mary."

Pastor—It is very much to be regretted, Thomas, that you had nothing better or more profitable to read at that time. The patience of men may, indeed, be exhausted by constantly hearing the same thing repeated; but can we compare our condition upon earth with the condition of the blessed spirits in heaven? If that were the case we could not say the "Our Father" more than once a day, for fear of displeasing and annoying God, just as we do not dare to

present two petitions on the same day to an earthly king. Now, God is no terrible or forbidding king, whose subjects must esteem it the highest favor to be permitted to utter a word in his presence; but he is a kind and loving father, who receives with complacency the petitions of his children, and who never tires to be called by the sweet name of Father. We do not read that the Saviour, on his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, felt annoyed by the repeated cries of "Hosanna, Son of David!" uttered by the people. These shouts of joy grated harshly only upon the ears of the Pharisees, whose hearts were filled with jealousy and envy of the Saviour at this mark of honor on the part of the people. And it really seems as if the enemies of the devotion to Mary shared the feelings of the Pharisees. The blind man by the wayside incessantly cried: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy upon me"; and the Gospel does not give us the least reason to suspect that the Saviour was vexed by these repeated cries. St. John, in the Apocalypse, tells us the heavenly hosts "rested not day and night, saying: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come." As little as this continued praise of the angels becomes irksome and tiresome to God, just so little does the frequent repetition of the Angelical Salutation try the patience of the Queen of Heaven. Let us only be solicitous always to say it with pure lips and clean hearts, as did the angel who brought down from heaven this sublime salutation.

Thomas—There is exactly the difficulty. Such oft-repeated prayers are uttered only mechanically, without thought or reflection.

Pastor—I am but too well aware that many say the Rosary thoughtlessly, and from mere habit, and yet flatter themselves that they have rendered an agreeable service to the Blessed Virgin. I can assure such that their Rosaries are rose-bushes, furnished with leaves and thorns, but no roses. Their

distracted, vain, worldly, and perhaps even sinful thoughts during prayer, are the thorns, and the many "Hail Marys," recited without attention, are the sapless and wilted leaves, which can have little value with the Mother of God. However, I am far from admitting that true devotion cannot be combined with the frequent repetition of the same prayer. If we would pray, we must, above all things, lift up our minds and heart to God, and place ourselves in his presence; we must remember that he is present everywhere, and therefore also near to us; we must speak to him, as if he, the loving Father, stood before us, and called upon us to make known to him our wants. He that prays in this manner will be able frequently to repeat the same prayer, and still have devotion; while another, who neglects this preparation cannot guard himself against distractions, no matter how varied his prayers may be. The same holds good of the prayers we address to the Blessed Virgin and the other saints. Still, I by no means maintain that we can avoid every distraction at prayer, even if we make a good preparation for it. One will succeed in this better than another, according to the natural disposition of his mind. Frequently, too, it is physical suffering, or want and anxiety, which distracts the soul while we are performing our devotions. For distractions occasioned only by human weakness we have no reproach to fear from God. Our prayer is good and pleasing in his sight, provided we have begun it with the right intention. Moreover, by perseverance we can more and more diminish even these distractions, for practice leads to perfection even in this.

Thomas—Your instruction on prayer is certainly beautiful, and cannot help proving of service to him who follows it. Still, it cannot be denied that the monotony of the devotion of the Rosary is particularly calculated to call forth distractions.

Pastor—This would be true, if this form of prayer did not

afford the mind sufficient food for meditation ; but he that is acquainted with its nature can certainly not cast upon it the reproach contained in your words. Yes, it is even more than a prayer. Recalling to our minds the chief doctrines of our holy religion, and the principal mysteries in the life, the Passion, and the glory of our Saviour Jesus Christ, it may justly be called *a brief compendium of the Christian faith and the Christian law.*

COMPONENT PARTS OF THE ROSARY.—The Rosary is composed of the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Angelical Salutation, and the principal mysteries in the life of our Lord and his Blessed Mother. The devotion of the Rosary consists in reciting, in honor of the Queen of Heaven, one hundred and fifty times the "Hail Mary." These "Hail Marys" are divided into fifteen decades, each one of which commences with the "Our Father," and terminates with the doxology, "Glory be to the Father," etc. The Angelical Salutation being repeated ten times is the reason why that portion of the Rosary is called a decade—the word decade signifying the sum or number of ten. The "Hail Mary" is repeated one hundred and fifty times, to correspond with the one hundred and fifty Psalms of the Royal Prophet ; hence this devotion is by some called the Psalter of the Blessed Virgin, as the book of Psalms is called the Psalter of David.

Division of the Rosary.—Each decade is accompanied by a meditation on one of the mysteries mentioned before. These mysteries are divided into three equal parts, each one of which is called a *chaplet* or *part*.

The *first part* represents the five joyful mysteries, which are : 1. The annunciation ; 2. The Visitation ; 3. The Nativity of our Lord ; 4. The Presentation of our Saviour in the Temple ; 5. The Finding of the child Jesus in the Temple.

The *second part* contains the five sorrowful mysteries—namely : 1. The Prayer and Bloody Sweat of our Lord

in the Garden ; 2. The Scourging at the Pillar ; 3. The Crowning with Thorns ; 4. The Carrying of the Cross ; 5. The Crucifixion of our Lord.

The *third part* represents the five glorious mysteries, which are : 1. The Resurrection ; 2. Ascension ; 3. The Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles ; 4. The Assumption of the Divine Mother into Heaven ; 5. The Coronation and Exaltation of Mary above all the Angels and Saints.

Each one of the three parts commences with the Apostles' Creed, together with three "Hail Marys" in honor of the Blessed Trinity.

If we recite the three parts of the Rosary together, we briefly recall to mind the whole history of the life, the Passion and glory of our Saviour, and the eternal reward of his holy Mother, and the mysteries added to each decade certainly afford us sufficient material for meditation.

Thomas—I must confess that until now I did not really understand this devotion, and it would be unreasonable of me not to admit its great excellence.

Pastor—It is indeed a sublime devotion, well meriting the name of Rosary, which signifies a crown or wreath of roses, and also a place planted with roses. For this devotion is a spiritual garden of blooming roses, and a mystical crown which we weave for our divine Lord and his holy Mother.

We begin this devotion with the Apostles' Creed, and in it we profess our belief in the Tri-une God—one in essence and threefold in person : We acknowledge the Father as the Omnipotent Creator of all things, visible and invisible ; we pay homage to God the Son as our Saviour, who for our salvation was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, was buried, and arose triumphantly from the grave. We acknowledge the Holy Ghost as the Sanctifier, the Dispenser of all graces, and the Guardian of the Church. At the termination of the Creed, and at the end of every decade, we add the doxology, "Glory be to the

Father," etc., and renew our homage to the three divine persons of the Blessed Trinity, in whom we have just professed our faith. With every "Hail Mary" we recall with grateful hearts the memory of the wonderful benefits of the Incarnation of the Eternal Word ; and in the five joyful, the five sorrowful, and the five glorious mysteries, upon which we meditate before each decade, we contemplate in mind, and profess with the lips, the astounding work of the redemption of a sin-laden world. There is no prayer or devotion that so briefly, yet so comprehensively, contains all the fundamental truths of our holy religion, as does the Rosary.

Before every decade of the Rosary we recite the Lord's Prayer. Now, the Lord's Prayer is also the *Lord's Law*. For whatever God enjoins upon us in his commandments, to do or to omit, is also contained in the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer. We begin with the words : "Our Father, who art in heaven," and, by the mouth of the prophet Malachy, God answers us : "The son honoreth the father, and the servant his master ; if then I be your Father, where is my honor ; and if I be your Master, where is my fear ?" And if we are permitted to call God our Father, then we are all members of one and the same family, and must therefore love each other as brethren, in heart, in word, and in deed. We continue to pray : "Hallowed be thy name," and are reminded of the commandment : "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." We beg, furthermore : "Thy kingdom come," and bring to mind the words of the Saviour : "Not every one who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven ; but he that shall do the will of my Heavenly Father" ; and therefore we pray : "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Now, the will of God is our sanctification ; "that renouncing impiety and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly, and piously in this world." Continuing this prayer, we implore of God to "give us our daily bread," but we do this in the

spirit of Him who has said : “Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on ; . . . for your Father knoweth that you have need of all those things. Seek ye, therefore,, first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness.” And the fifth petition : “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us,” is it not a forcible admonition to forgive and love our enemies ? And in the conclusion we beg of God that he would “not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” Now, the only *real* evil is sin, and against this we can only guard ourselves by the aid of God’s holy grace.

In the recitation of this prayer, we renew, moreover, the acts of Hope and Charity, uniting them with the act of Faith, professed in the Apostles’ Creed, which we made the foundation of our prayer. For we cannot more firmly strengthen our hope, or more lastingly enkindle our charity, than by attentively and devoutly reciting that prayer taught us by the lips of Eternal Wisdom himself. Everything that we may hope and ask for, for time and eternity, for soul and body, is contained in it, and amid the effusions of purest love we pour out our supplications at the feet of a merciful Father. Thus this prayer recalls to our mind everything that we must believe in order “to please God,” and admonishes us of every duty which, according to the Christian law, we owe to God, to our neighbor, and to ourselves. Everything in the devotion of the Rosary is of Scriptural, apostolical, holy origin. It is a golden book that contains upon fifteen pages all the truths of our holy faith, and the whole sum of the moral wisdom of Christianity. It is a book, moreover, that all “of good will” can read and understand—the unlearned as well as the learned.

Thomas—Viewed in this light, every objection to the Rosary must fall to the ground. I confess, to my own mortification, that sometimes I have blushed when non-Catholics ridiculed this sublime devotion as mummary and superstition,

and that I sought to excuse it by saying that it was a method of prayer invented for the poor and ignorant who could not make use of a prayer-book. I now declare my intention of frequently reciting it in the future.

Pastor—You can only profit by it; and you will have nobler predecessors in saying the Rosary than in being ashamed to recite it. The holiest and most venerable men of the Catholic Church, and at the same time the most learned that have ever lived, have practised this devotion, and cherished for it the highest esteem, for the simple reason that they rightly understood it. Yes, the Rosary, like the cross, has become the characteristic mark of the true Catholic; all the religious carry it attached to their cinctures or belts, and however negligent in saying it a Catholic may have been during his life, and whatever display of his contempt for it he may have made before others, when he dies his relatives hasten to place the Rosary, together with the cross, into his lifeless hands;* and if, after years, we open some unknown grave, the Rosary, which is perhaps the only thing we find in the little heap of dust, tells us that we are standing by the side of the last resting-place of a Catholic Christian.

Simon—It shall be my endeavor always to cherish in life the Rosary which is to accompany me in death.

Pastor—I shall do likewise. As a distinctive sign of a Catholic, it shall, with the crucifix, always adorn my chamber; and the sign which is to mark my body in death shall be near me also in life.

With these words the pastor drew forth a Rosary, which he carried with him, and quite a number of the assembly were able to imitate his example. Since we have our Rosaries with us, the Pastor said, we may as well make use of them

* In Catholic countries it is the custom to place in the hands of the dead a small crucifix and a rosary.

for actual prayer. It is not very late, and, if time presses, we can shorten our devotion.

All readily assented, and they had not to search long for a suitable place for their devotion. Not far from the linden-tree, under which they held their meetings, there stood a pretty statue of the Blessed Virgin with the infant Jesus. The inscription underneath recorded the fact that it had been erected very many years before by the villagers, as a votive offering to the Mother of God, in gratitude for having been freed, through her intercession, from a great affliction. Several similar occurrences had given occasion, from time to time, to restore the statue, so that it, and the niche or little chapel in which it stood, were well preserved. Thither all repaired, with the Pastor at the head, and recited the third part of the Rosary, with the glorious mysteries.—When they had ended, the Pastor intoned the following well-known hymn of St. Casimir; it was at once taken up by the assembly, as they were all thoroughly familiar with it:

Daily, daily, sing to Mary,
Sing, my soul, her praises due;
All her feasts, her actions worship
With the heart's devotion true.
Lost in wond'ring contemplation,
Be her majesty confessed;
Call her Mother, call her Virgin—
Happy Mother, Virgin blest!

This strophe having been sung, the pastor dismissed the people. As they dispersed in groups, in different directions, they continued to sing the two remaining stanzas:

She is mighty to deliver;
Call her, trust her lovingly;
When the tempest rages round thee,
She will calm the troubled sea.

Gifts of heaven she has given,
Noble Lady, to our race ;
She the Queen, who decks her subjects
With the light of God's own grace.

All my senses, heart, affections,
Strive to sound her glory forth ;
Spread abroad the sweet memorials
Of the Virgin's priceless worth.
Sing in songs of praise unending,
Sing the world's majestic Queen ;
Weary not, nor faint in telling
All the gifts she gives to men.

till gradually the last notes died out in the distance.

CHAPTER XII.

The Feasts of the Saints.

SIMON—Would you be kind enough, Your Reverence, this evening, to tell us something about the feasts of the other saints?

Pastor—It is both my intention and my duty to do so, but you must not expect the same completeness and detail that I observed in speaking of the feasts that have gone before, otherwise a year would not suffice for the explanation. We shall go through the different classes of saints, and then if you desire to know anything particular about one or the other of them, you may ask for information.

Simon—I presume the feasts of the apostles are first in order?

Pastor—Let us first speak of several feasts on which we do not venerate the saints, properly speaking, but those who have never lived upon earth.

Simon—How is that?

Pastor—I mean the *Feasts of the Angels*; you know the Church celebrates several of them in the course of the year.

Simon—It is true; particularly the beautiful Feast of the Guardian Angels.

Pastor—This deserves, indeed, to be mentioned before all others; for it furnishes us a new proof of the love of God for us, in giving us his heavenly spirits to shield and support us in our weakness. Therefore this festival is also an admonition to thank God with sincere hearts for such a favor, and to re-

new our resolution to make ourselves worthy of such pure and holy guardian spirits.

Joseph—We daily pray to the guardian angels.

Pastor—And we have good cause never to omit this prayer, for 1) the angel, whom God himself gave us for the protection of body and soul, is especially appointed, and endowed with the power, by his intercession, to obtain for us the precious gifts of our Heavenly Father. This prayer to the guardian angel will 2) serve to remind us not to prove ourselves unworthy of our spiritual protector. Often we fear the eye of man more than the eye of God, and we dare to commit deeds in the presence of God, that we would not venture to do in the sight of our fellow-men. Let, then, the thought that one of our fellow-creatures, our holy angel, is present and witnesses our actions, deter us from every sin. This same angel will one day stand at our side on the awful day of judgment, and be our intercessor with God, if our life has merited such a favor ; but he will also be our accuser, if he has labored in vain for us, and if we have despised his warning voice. 3) The thought of our guardian angels will also remind us of the guardian angels of others, and will deter us from leading others into sin, if ever we should fall into such a danger. Our Saviour most earnestly reminds us that the angels of the innocent little ones always see the face of the Heavenly Father, and that therefore we should take heed not to scandalize one of these little ones—that is to say, not to lead them to any sin—because otherwise their angels would become our accusers, and it were better for us that a mill-stone were hanged about our neck, and that we were drowned in the depth of the sea, than be compelled to answer such a charge. Finally 4), the memory of the guardian angels, and their office, will encourage us to imitate them ; for we, too, must be for all those who belong to us, or who are especially entrusted to our care, visible guardian angels. And if it be well to call all this to mind every day, we ought particu-

larly to do so on the feast-day of these blessed spirits. To animate us to do this, and to afford us an opportunity, the Church has appointed this festival. Originally it was celebrated together with the Feast of St. Michael, 29th of September, but for about two hundred years it has been celebrated as a separate feast on the 2d of October.

Simon—You have just mentioned another feast of the angels—that of St. Michael.

Pastor—We celebrate three special feasts in honor of the angels: the feast of the *Archangel Raphael*, who showed himself such a kind messenger from heaven to Tobias; the feast of the *Archangel Gabriel*, who was honored by God with the commission to announce to Mary her elevation to the dignity of Mother of God, and the advent of the long-looked-for Messiah; and, finally, the feast of *St. Michael*, who is mentioned by the Holy Scriptures as fighting a great battle with the dragon and his followers. This feast was celebrated in the Church as early as the fifth century; the other two were subsequently added. The names of these angels already indicate the offices assigned to them. *Michael* means: “Who is like God?” *Gabriel* signifies the “Strength of God,” and *Raphael* the “Cure of God.” Before speaking of the feasts of the apostles I must first make mention of those saints that belong to the Old Testament.

Simon—Which are these?

Pastor—First, the feast of the seven *Machabee Martyrs*, brothers, and their heroic mother, who all suffered the most cruel tortures and death rather than violate the laws of God and forsake the faith of their fathers. This feast was celebrated on the first of August in the first ages of the Church. The heroism of these Jewish brothers and their mother puts to shame many Christians, who, though not exposed to tortures and the pain of death, are cowardly enough to be ashamed to confess their faith, and even, by word and deed, to deny it. —We also celebrate the memory of the holy parents of the

Blessed Virgin, *Joachim* and *Anna*. As early as 650 a church was dedicated to St. Anna in Constantinople, and Anna has been at all times a favorite name given to children. The Church intends, in this feast, to show her gratitude to St. Ann for the care and solicitude bestowed on the Blessed Virgin, and then to stimulate Christian parents to bestow the same solicitude upon the children entrusted to them.—The memory of *St. Joseph*, the *Foster-father of the Saviour*, was held in high honor in the early days of Christianity. This saint surely merits the highest veneration, and his virtuous example deserves to be diligently imitated, for the Holy Scripture calls him a just man, and he was found worthy to be chosen by God to provide for the temporal wants of the new-born Saviour and his holy Mother.—There are two festivals celebrated in honor of St. Joseph—namely, that of his *Name*, on the 19th of March, and the Feast of the *Patronage of St. Joseph*, on the Wednesday before the third Sunday after Easter. Finally, I have to mention the feast of the *Nativity of St. John the Baptist*, the precursor of the Lord, on the 24th of June. In the days of St. Augustine this feast was considered of long standing in the Church. Christianity has dedicated a day to the memory of this saint, who was so near to the Saviour, who labored so earnestly in the cause of the new covenant, and of whom the Redeemer himself says that “none greater was born of woman,” and who was, as the Evangelist tells us, sanctified in his mother’s womb.—The Feast of the Holy Innocents also belongs to this class of festivals.

Simon—Of this feast you kindly gave us an account when speaking of Christmas.

Pastor—Now we may proceed to the consideration of the feasts of the saints of the New Testament, and of these I shall first mention the feasts of the apostles. Originally only one feast of the apostles was celebrated—namely, that of St. Peter and St. Paul, and with this the memory of the other apostles was combined. In later times festivals were

also instituted in honor of the other apostles, and in several instances the same day is set apart in memory of two apostles (for example, for Sts. Philip and James, Simon and Jude). Some apostles have several feasts; thus, we celebrate the feast of St. Peter in Chains, in memory of his imprisonment and miraculous liberation; then the memory of his taking possession of the sees of Antioch and Rome; these events are celebrated under the title of the Chair of St. Peter in Antioch, and the Chair of St. Peter in Rome. The feasts of the Evangelists, and of the disciple of the apostles, Barnabas, may be counted among the festivals of the apostles. On all of these days we ought gratefully to call to mind the mercy of the Redeemer in sending out those holy heralds of the faith to free mankind from sin and ignorance, and we should furthermore rejoice that we belong to the number of those to whom the divine right of the Gospel has appeared, and renew our resolution, both by faith and by our manner, of life, to show ourselves worthy confessors of the Gospel and true followers of Christ. The apostles, who had consecrated their whole lives to the preaching of the Word of God, and who, nearly all of them, shed their blood for the sake of the Gospel, are certainly prepared, even now, by their intercession, to increase the faith in the Redeemer, and to further true Christian life. Let us, then, diligently pray to them, that, through their prayers, the light of heavenly truth, and the protection of divine grace may ever be secured to us and others, and be spread more and more over the face of the earth.

Simon—What is the meaning of the different emblems with which the apostles are represented?

Pastor—Those accompanying the apostles you may easily divine yourselves. St. Peter, is the visible representative of Christ, is shown holding in his hands the keys, emblematic of the kingdom of heaven, promised him by the Saviour. The other apostles are ordinarily represented with the in-

struments of their martyrdom or death ; thus St. Paul with the sword, St. Andrew with the cross, etc. The symbols accompanying the Evangelists are taken from the Apocalypse of St. John (iv. 6 and 7), where we read: “. . . round about the throne were four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind. The first living creature was like to a lion, and the second like to a calf, and the third having the face, as it were, of a man, and the fourth was like to an eagle flying.” These are generally thought to represent the holy Evangelists. St. Mark, whose gospel begins with the preaching of St. John the Baptist, is likened to a lion—his voice resounding in the desert. St. Luke treats of the priesthood of Zachary in the commencement of his gospel, and it is thought to be symbolized by the calf, which was offered in sacrifice. St. Matthew gives the genealogy of Christ and his human career, and may be represented by the creature having the face of a man. St. John, who at once soars to the bosom of the Deity, has obtained the title of eagle. The prophetic vision and historic knowledge of the Evangelists may be symbolized by the many eyes.

Now we may turn our attention to the second class of the feasts of saints—namely, to the FEASTS OF THE MARTYRS ; these are the oldest of all the feasts of the Church, more ancient even than those of the apostles. The *Feast of St. Stephen* was celebrated in the Greek Church as early as the fourth century, on the day following Christmas, as is done to-day. Originally the memory of the martyrs was celebrated in those cities and places where they suffered death for the sake of the faith ; thus, for example, the death of St. Lawrence was first commemorated in Rome. Gradually their celebration spread all over the Church. The Christians rejoiced at the heroic courage with which the martyrs gave testimony to the faith of Christ, even unto death, and they looked upon it as a sacred privilege to give evidence to their own love for the Gospel by the solemn veneration of the faith-

ful followers of Christ. They sought, moreover, in this manner to animate themselves to a like zeal and fidelity in the confession of Christ. Hence the greatest care was taken to note down everything, even the most trifling circumstance, which took place at the execution of the martyrs. These records were called the "Acts of the Martyrs," and were mutually exchanged by the bishops of different countries and places, and were read for edification at the divine service of the Christians. To these "Acts of the Martyrs" we are indebted for the account of the life and death of these Christian heroes which we find to-day in the "Lives of the Saints." The object of the celebration of the feasts of the martyrs is the same to-day that it was in the primitive Church. We, too, are to animate ourselves to remain firm and unshaken in our faith, and to allow no obstacle to hinder us from the faithful practice of virtue. If we sincerely invoke the aid of the saints, they will certainly obtain for us from God the gift of perseverance in faith and virtue.—I should have mentioned above that the word martyr comes from the Greek, and signifies a witness who testifies by his blood.

Thomas—Is the invocation of the saints enjoined by a positive command, and would one commit a sin by not asking their prayers?

Pastor—The teaching of the Catholic Church on this point is defined by the Council of Trent as follows: "The saints reigning with Christ *offer up their prayers to God for men*, and it is *good and useful* suppliantly to invoke them, and to have recourse to their *prayers*, help, and assistance, to obtain favors from God, *through his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alone our Redeemer and Saviour*" (Council Trent, sess. 25). From this definition you will see that the Church has given no *positive command* to pray to the saints, and hence you would commit no sin if in your whole life you would not offer a single prayer to them—at least not by reason of having *transgressed a precept*. But whether you could

with impunity despise so powerful a means to aid you in doing the will of God here below, and treat with contempt a practice which your Church teaches you is good and profitable, is another question. Who, believing in the communion of the saints, would forego this great advantage?

Thomas—But it has been often objected to me, by non-Catholics, that we have no proofs from Holy Scripture which show that God has actually heard the prayers of the saints.

Pastor—This objection only shows that they who make it do not diligently read that holy book, which they claim to be their sole rule and guide. The Scriptures contain abundant instances which prove even more than this. For instance, in the book of Exodus (xvii) we read that Moses, the great servant and prophet of the Lord, went up on a mountain to pray for the success of the people of Israel in their war with the Amalecites, and that, whenever Moses raised his hands in prayer, the Israelites were victorious, but when he ceased to pray Amalec conquered. Here the prayer of Moses was more efficacious than the arms of the fighting hosts. When the friends of Job had brought upon themselves the wrath of God by their vain speech, the Lord, instead of directly granting them the pardon they sought, commanded them to invoke the intercession of Job. “Take unto you,” he says, “seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you, for him will I accept.” Nor did they appeal to Job in vain, for “the Lord was turned at the penance of Job when he prayed for his friends.” In this instance God even commanded intercessory prayer. Now, if God granted the prayer of these his servants while they were yet on earth, and were still subject to frailties and imperfections—for the Holy Ghost tells us that even the just man falls seven times a day—how much more readily will he hear the prayers of his saints in

heaven, who are free from every stain of sin and imperfection, and confirmed in grace and glory! Moreover, those who find fault with Catholics for asking the prayers of the saints, themselves ask the prayers of sinful mortals, for it is a common practice among non-Catholics to ask the prayers of one another.

Thomas—I must confess that I cannot understand how we can speak of the invocation of the saints for special favors. I always thought that the saints prayed for all men in general. If it were otherwise, they would have to be omniscient, in order to know the petition of each individual.

Pastor—Or God must at least reveal to them our requests. However this may be, we have the assurance that they know our prayers, for the Scripture tells us that they offer them up to God (Rev. v. 8 and viii. 3, 4).

Thomas—It is permissible, then, to address ourselves to some particular saint to acquire some particular virtue?

Pastor—I see no reason why this should be wrong, for it is very probable that those saints will be particularly desirous to aid us, by their intercession, to acquire that virtue which they practised with special predilection while on earth, or which they preserved amid special temptations.

Thomas—What are we to believe of those who in particular difficulties, in sickness, or special ailments of the body, address themselves in prayer to one saint in preference to another, and through him expect to be heard?

Pastor—If the prayer is offered in the proper spirit of resignation to the will of God, as every prayer should be, then no fault can be found with this practice. Experience certainly teaches that the invocation of certain saints, in particular necessities, has been graciously heard by God. Although bodily pains are not felt in heaven, still we can scarcely assume that the martyrs, who were tortured and suffered in a particular member of their bodies, have entirely forgotten these sufferings, and they will, without doubt,

gladly take an interest in those who, by sickness and the like, suffer in the same member of the body.

Simon—Who are the Confessors? I have often met with this name.

Pastor—Those among the saints are called *Confessors* who did not, like the martyrs, shed their blood for the faith, but who, by their virtues and exemplary lives, showed themselves true servants and followers of Christ. Strictly speaking, they do not differ much from the martyrs; for every true Christian must be a martyr, at least in spirit—that is to say, he must be prepared to sacrifice his life rather than offend his Heavenly Father by a sin against faith or virtue. Whether he shall ever be placed in the situation to make this sacrifice in reality or not, makes no difference. If he preserves in his heart the firmness and constancy of a martyr, and perseveres to the end in the observance of God's commandments, he will gain for himself the reward of eternal happiness, conferred upon the martyrs. The martyrs were always held in special honor, because by their death they had given palpable evidence that they loved God above all things, and esteemed his pleasure higher even than life; but we can also attain a like distinction in the eyes of God by a pious and saintly life. Indeed, there may occur instances in which it is far more difficult and trying to pass a whole life of grievous temptations, than for a short period to overcome the fear of death and torture. In such instances we may also expect a greater reward from God.

Simon—Yes, there are men whose whole lives are continued chains of trials and persecutions.

Pastor—And if they endure these for the sake of Christ, or offer up to him their trials and afflictions, Christ will also crown them as he did the martyrs. I make this observation in order to stimulate and encourage you to lead holy lives; for, being no longer exposed to the danger of being dragged before pagan tribunals, and of being put to death for reli-

gion's sake, we ought all to become unbloody martyrs or confessors of the faith. All who depart this life in the state of grace may be called confessors ; no doubt you count many such among your deceased relatives, and woe be to you, if at your death you do not depart hence in a state of grace.

Simon—But the names of these saints cannot surely all be contained in the calendar ?

Pastor—That is of no moment, but it is very important that *our* names be inscribed above, in the Book of Life. The calendar does not even contain a complete register of all the saints whom we actually venerate as such upon earth ; there is a much more extensive register called the Martyrology, or Book of Martyrs, in which the names of all the saints acknowledged by the Church are inscribed. The saints do not, of course, derive any benefit from having their names enrolled in this book ; they enjoy on that account neither more nor less happiness in heaven ; but we need a certain number, concerning whose enjoyment of the beatific vision of heaven we have the greatest possible certainty. This book or register, in a manner, constitutes the *letters-patent* of the Catholic Church, by which she proves herself to be the saving Church of Christ.

Simon—To whom does it belong to determine whose name is to be inscribed in this register or calendar ?

Pastor—At present it is the Holy Father, the Pope, who decides this question after having instituted the necessary examination. This act of the Supreme Head of the Church is called “ canonization,” or the placing of the name of one eminent for his sanctity in the catalogue or *canon* of saints. In the primitive Church the solemn mode of canonization of the present day was not known. In those days the bishops caused a reliable history of the martyrs to be written by notaries, especially appointed for this purpose ; sometimes they had these authentic histories of the martyrs compiled from the records of the pagan tribunals. The bishops then ex-

amined these acts of the martyrs, weighed the circumstances of their death, and if they were convinced that one or the other of these martyrs was put to death solely for the sake of the faith, and for no other reason, the acts were read in the public assemblies of the faithful, and the names of these witnesses of the faith were entered in the lists called Diptychs, and publicly mentioned during the holy sacrifice of the Mass. The reading of a martyr's name at the holy Mass was equivalent to canonization in the early Church. Every bishop could propose such martyrs for veneration to the faithful of his own diocese. The bishops also, as I have said, exchanged among each other the records or acts of the martyrs acknowledged and venerated as such in their countries or dioceses ; in this manner the veneration of the martyrs gradually became general, and from the constantly swelling lists of so many martyrs in different countries and dioceses, has sprung the Martyrology already alluded to, or the Calendar of the Saints.

Simon—You are constantly speaking of martyrs ; were there no other saints entered in these lists ?

Pastor—In the early ages of the Church these lists were indeed only adorned with the names of such as had shed their blood for Christ. At that period the number of these witnesses of the faith was so great, that it was scarcely deemed worth while to pay special regard to an otherwise holy life, that was not terminated by this supreme act of heroism ; the more so, because among the early Christians a life of perfection and sanctity was not at all uncommon. It was only at a later period that the names of others, who had not sealed their faith with their blood, were inserted in these registers.

Simon—Do the bishops still place the names of those who have led holy lives in the list of the saints ?

Pastor—No ; it is now reserved, as I have already remarked, to the Sovereign Pontiff ; this was done because there was

reason to fear, that, in some cases, the necessary care and strictness might not always be exercised.

Simon—I have also met with the word *Beatification*. Is there any difference between this and *Canonization*?

Pastor—Beatification is only a preparatory step toward canonization; a preliminary decision of the Church that a particular servant of God may receive the religious veneration of the faithful. Canonization is the final act by which the Sovereign Pontiff presents him who has already been beatified, or declared *blessed*, to the whole Church for imitation and veneration, while the veneration of the beatified is more restricted. In other words, by the act of beatification the Pope permits, and by the act of canonization he recommends, veneration to be paid to a saint.—Formerly the beatification of a saint took place without any special solemn ceremonies, being decided and announced by a simple papal rescript. Pope Alexander XII. was the first to employ religious pomp, at the beatification of St. Francis de Sales, in the Vatican Church. This example was afterwards followed by the other pontiffs on similar occasions. I need scarcely tell you that the act of beatification or of canonization does not first open heaven to the person canonized. It is only a solemn declaration that, after having carefully examined into the life and death of a person departed, and also into the miracles wrought by his intercession, there can no longer be any doubt that he has been admitted to the joys of heaven.

Thomas—Well, I presume the examinations made in such cases do not signify very much.

Pastor—You grievously err, Thomas, if you imagine that these examinations are conducted in a careless or superficial manner. The Sovereign Pontiffs have always regarded the canonization of a saint as a matter depending more upon the decrees and judgment of God than upon the discernment of human wisdom, and therefore they have never failed, in such cases, to have recourse to earnest prayer and the frequent in-

vocation of the Holy Ghost. Nor do they neglect to make use of the means suggested by human prudence, always employing the utmost diligence, caution, and serious deliberation. At first the canonization of saints took place in the councils of the Church. Afterwards these declarations were made through the Pope, by the advice and counsel of the cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, outside of a formal council, and such is the custom of to-day. A rigid examination having been made, by a formal process, into the worthiness of the person to be canonized or beatified, the Pope gives his solemn decision in the presence of his council of cardinals, the latter having first voted upon the question. The following are the stages of the proceedings: 1. The formal process of enquiry on the part of the bishop in whose diocese the person to be beatified has lived. The bishop of the place is instructed to examine whether unauthorized honor or veneration has been shown to the person, and also into the sanctity of his life, and the miracles said to have been worked by him. 2. If after the episcopal enquiry, the fame of sanctity, of the person for whom beatification is asked, still continues, the validity of the first process is subjected to the examination of the cardinals appointed for this purpose by the Holy Father, and confirmed. 3. If all the evidence concerning the holiness of his life is brought forward, and at least two miracles wrought through him are incontestably proved, his beatification then follows. The title of "blessed" is conferred upon him, and a limited veneration is permitted. If the veneration of the saint continues, and new miracles take place, the last stage of the proceeding—namely, the canonization—is introduced. This is done in a papal consistory, where the title of "saint" is given to him previously declared "blessed." His relics may now be exposed for public veneration, and permission is granted to celebrate feasts and offices, and erect churches in his honor. There is probably

no case submitted to any legal tribunal in the world which is more rigidly examined, more obstinately contested, more clearly proved, and more impartially decided, than the process of beatification and canonization. Men, eminent for their science and learning, are appointed to examine the virtues and miracles of the servant of God presented for beatification, and, if possible, to refute them. The most learned divines and the most skilled physicians must have recognized and acknowledged the reported miracles as truly supernatural, so that no reasonable doubt can remain of his virtues and the genuineness of his miracles. Only after all this has been scrupulously done, can the canonization take place. So strict is this examination that, according to an Italian proverb, "It is next to a miracle to get a miracle proved in Rome." It is reported that an English Protestant gentleman, meeting in that city with a printed process of forty miracles, which had been laid before the Congregation of Rites, to which the examination of them belonged, was so well satisfied with the respective proofs of them, as to express a wish that Rome would never allow of any miracles but such as had been thus solidly established. He was informed that every one of these had been rejected by the Congregation as not sufficiently proved.

Thomas—Must we believe that the saints whose names we find in the calendar are really in heaven?

Pastor—This is not a dogma of the Catholic Church. Christ has promised his Church the assistance of the Holy Ghost to guard her against every error in regard to the revealed truths, but he has not promised to reveal to her whether this or that person is in heaven. Therefore, the Catholic Church does not claim infallibility in this matter. But it is another question whether it is reasonable, after so careful and strict an examination, to doubt whether those canonized by the Church really enjoy the beatific vision of God.

Simon—The solemn canonization of a saint must be a grand spectacle. I would love dearly once to witness it.

Pastor—Yes, no doubt. But however beautiful and edifying it may be, it is certainly far more beautiful and profitable if, according to the intention of the Church, we place the virtues of the saints as models and patterns before our eyes, and strive to realize them in our own lives. This remark brings me back to the holy confessors, of whom I have last spoken. These belonged to various states and conditions in life. We find among them popes, bishops, and priests, hermits, religious, heads of families, rich and poor, kings and beggars, and almost each one is noted for some special virtue, which, besides the other virtues of Christian perfection, he practised with predilection during his life. I will only name a few. In St. Anthony we admire particularly his fervor of devotion; in St. Dominic his great zeal to instruct and to preach the Word of God; in St. Aloysius his angelic purity; in St. Bernard his childlike devotion to the Blessed Virgin; St. Francis of Assisi is a model of the contempt of earthly riches; St. Vincent de Paul of self-sacrificing charity for our fellow-men; and St. Philip Neri of true interest and affection for youth. Of St. Nicholas an ancient tradition tells us that he furnished dowries for several indigent young women, by throwing, unnoticed, certain sums of money into their rooms through the window, in this manner saving their honor, which was endangered. Thus each one presents us some particular virtue for imitation. Strive, therefore, from each to learn a particular lesson, and to become true, perfect, and holy Christians.

Simon—Father, the women of the assembly here are quite indignant with you for mentioning only names of holy men, as if none of their own sex ever got to heaven.

Pastor—Well, the virtues which I have cited may and ought to be practised also by the women. However, I hope to regain their good will, when they learn from me that from

among them the Church has formed two special classes of highly honored saints : one composed of such saints as preserved their virginal purity to the end of their lives, and the other including those who, although not having remained virgins, were distinguished for pious and truly Christian lives. When explaining to you the Litany of Loretto, I told you the high esteem in which the Church has ever held the state of virginity. If then a virgin, for her whole life, preserves unsullied her virginal purity, and is, moreover, solicitous by her virtues to prove herself a true follower of Jesus Christ, the Church rejoices to place her, after her death, in the list of her saints, and to honor her as one of her noblest and most deserving members. Still more gladly and cheerfully do we honor those who, besides the crown of virginity, have won for themselves also the crown of martyrdom. The weaker and more timid the female sex is, compared to men, the greater is the glory of woman, if, overcoming her natural timidity and weakness, she distinguishes herself by heroically enduring cruel tortures and death for the sake of faith and virtue, and thus becomes the worthy peer of the noblest heroes of Christianity. Hence we so highly honor St. Agnes, who as a tender child did not shrink from bloody death for the Gospel's sake ; St. Catharine, who is said to have been placed upon an engine furnished with sharp-pointed spikes, because she would not yield up her faith and her chastity ; St. Barbara, who would rather languish in a tower than offer sacrifice to the idols ; St. Agatha, who preferred to endure every torture rather than lose the honor of her virginity. The lamb of St. Agnes, the palm-branch of St. Agatha (the emblem of her martyrdom), the tower of St. Barbara, the wheel of St. Catherine, all these emblems, which accompany the representations of these virgin-martyrs, are for us glorious memorials of their heroism ; and though the Christian virgins of to-day need not endure the death of martyrdom, in order to preserve their chastity, they may

learn, from the example of these holy servants of Christ, the high value of purity, and from it derive encouragement resolutely to resist the comparatively lighter temptations to which their virtue may be exposed. Finally, we honor and venerate those who, without having preserved their virginity for Christ's sake, have yet, as mothers or matrons, shown themselves worthy of Christ and his Gospel: St. Monica, who by her persevering prayers implored from God the conversion of her son, St. Augustine; St. Elizabeth, who tended and nursed the poor like her own children; St. Frances Fremiot, who adorned her life with works of piety and Christian charity; St. Mary Magdalen, to whom are applicable the words of the Saviour, that there is more joy in heaven upon one sinner doing penance than upon ninety-nine just. These, and many more, teach us that the Church of God always seeks in every manner to honor piety and sanctity, and to recommend them as examples for our imitation. Now, I trust the female portion of the assembly is no longer displeased with me, for I have surely given them sufficient models of virtue from among their own sex which they may follow. From the lives of the saints let us learn, whatever be our sex or condition, the path that leads to the kingdom of heaven, that one day, in union with the Blessed Virgin, the holy apostles, the martyrs, confessors, virgins, and all the saints of God, we may all meet at the throne of our heavenly Father.

Simon—God grant that none of us may be missing.

Pastor—And may we, by our example upon earth, not only attain our own salvation, but also contribute to the salvation of others. And that we may realize this, let us in spirit walk with the saints, imitate their virtues, and by diligent invocation obtain for ourselves their powerful intercession with God.

Simon—No doubt this is the motive of the Church in appointing the feasts of the saints.

Pastor—Her motive in appointing these feasts was: 1. That we might invoke them; 2. That we might look upon their lives as models for our imitation; 3. That the saints might be honored on earth for their virtues, as they assuredly merit; and 4. That, according to the words of the Psalmist, we might “praise God in his saints.” If we can discover the omnipotence, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator in his visible works, in every blade of grass, in every tree, and in every animal, and if we delight in these creatures, should not our joy in the spiritual works of God be incomparably greater. and should we not still more admire his sanctity and the power of his grace in his saints?

With this let us terminate the evening. May the angels of God watch over you and keep from you every harm.

CHAPTER XIII.

Feast of the Dedication of a Church.

PASTOR—The feast of the dedication of a church will afford me an occasion of imparting to you much interesting and important information.

Simon—Your kind explanations will only increase our debt of gratitude.

Pastor—When an edifice, erected to the honor of the Most High, is completed, the bishop receives it in the name of God from the hands of the faithful by whose piety and generosity it was built, and solemnly dedicates it to the exclusive purposes of divine worship. Henceforth it is withdrawn from every profane use, and, in the emphatic language of the Scriptures, it becomes a “House of God” (Gen. xxviii. 17). When circumstances permit, the anniversary of this happy event is observed as a festival day, by the people worshipping in this church; but when, for certain reasons, this is impracticable, one day, usually a Sunday, is set apart for the whole diocese, on which the faithful are called upon to give sincere thanks to God for the priceless boon of possessing a sacred edifice devoted to the service of God, in which they can approach his holy altar, and in union offer up to him the homage of their adoration, assist at the Most Holy Sacrifice, hear his divine word, and receive the graces of his sacraments. God, it is true, is everywhere present, and is to be honored by the homage of our affections in all places. But in those which are sacred to him, and in which his faithful servants unite their suffrages, greater glory redounds

to him from their prayers, and he is usually more ready to hear and grant them. Of the Temple of Jerusalem, built by Solomon, he says: "I have heard thy prayer, and I have chosen this place for a house of sacrifice. . . . My eyes shall be open, and my ears attentive to the prayer of him who shall pray in this place" (2 Paral. vii. 12 and 15). We can, moreover, pray better and more fervently in the house of God, because the piety of the devout assemblage, and the grandeur and majesty of divine service, all tend to elevate the soul, and to call forth sentiments of devotion. The soldiers of an army will certainly fight more valiantly, and will more surely gain the victory, if they are united, than if they are detached and scattered. So likewise is it with the prayers of the faithful united in common devotion in the house of God.—As regards the temples or churches, they are as ancient as Christianity itself. Christians had from the beginning chambers or oratories in private houses, set apart for their religious assemblies and sacrifices, as appears from St. Paul (1 Cor. xi. 22) and from the Upper Room, in which it is mentioned that the apostles frequently assembled (Acts i. 13). During the times of the persecutions the Christians had to take refuge in underground vaults and crypts, and these thereupon became their churches or places of meeting for divine worship, and from them the praises of God and the prayers of the faithful ascended to heaven, no less earnestly and fervently than they do at present from our splendid cathedrals; and the streams of divine grace flowed as abundantly there as they do now in the most costly churches.

Simon—Frequently their devotion may have been even greater than it is found to-day in the grandest Christian temples.

Pastor—Strive that this reproach may not apply to our congregation.—Whenever a respite from persecution was granted the Christians, they at once set about constructing churches and temples, which they were compelled to abandon

on the outbreak of a new persecution. Eusebius, the historian, says that during the peace which the church enjoyed, from the persecution of Valerian to that of Diocletian, the ancient churches were not large enough to contain the faithful, and therefore they erected from the foundation new ones, more ample and spacious in every way. After the victory of Constantine the Great over Maxentius, the Christians, protected and favored by the emperor, built everywhere sumptuous churches. After his conversion Constantine stimulated them by his own example. He himself founded and endowed a vast number of most costly churches. On a previous occasion I mentioned one of the churches built by Constantine. Can any one call it to memory?

Simon—The church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

Pastor—Besides the many churches built by this pious emperor in the East, he also erected two in the city of Rome, the principal one being that of Our Saviour, commonly called St. John Lateran, and the other the church of St. Peter.

Simon—Why is the first called the church of St. John?

Pastor—It has received this name from a chapel of St. John, built within the enclosed area of the main church, and which was dedicated in honor of St. John the Baptist. This chapel was the baptistery, and the baptismal font was ornamented with an image of St. John the Baptist. The name of "Lateran" was given to it from the circumstance that the church was partially built from the material of the palace of Lateran which stood upon Mount Cœlio, near the place where the church was erected. It was here that the popes usually resided, but Pope Gregory IX. transferred his residence to St. Peter's or the Vatican, and his successors continued to live there.

Simon—Is the present church of St. Peter the same that was built by Constantine?

Pastor—No. The present basilica of St. Peter was com-

menced in 1450 by Pope Nicholas V. It is a finished masterpiece of architecture, and in point of splendor and magnitude surpasses all the great cathedrals of the world. Its length, from the outside of the walls, including the portals, is 700 feet, and its width 250 feet. The grand cupola which surmounts the building measures 193 feet in diameter, and its height, from the pavement to the top of the cross, is 448 feet. The building of St. Peter's, from its foundation in 1450 till its dedication in 1626, occupied 175 years.

Simon—What is the Vatican to which you referred a moment ago?

Pastor—The Vatican is the palace or residence of the Holy Father. It derives its name from the circumstance that it is situated upon the Vatican Mount, one of the seven hills of Rome. It immediately adjoins the basilica of St. Peter's. The Vatican, commenced by Pope Innocent III. (1198–1216), and enlarged by Nicholas III. (1277–1281), did not become the permanent residence of the Popes till after their return from Avignon in 1377. The whole palace, which is rather a group of buildings than one regular edifice, having been constructed at different periods, is undoubtedly the most magnificent in the world. It occupies a space of 1,151 by 767 feet, and has 200 staircases, 20 courts, and 4,422 rooms. The collections of the Vatican Museum are the finest of the kind ever made. The picture-gallery contains greater treasures than any other in the world. The library of the Vatican, founded in 1378, contains 105,000 volumes and 25,500 manuscripts.

Thomas—You have remarked several times that churches were erected in honor of the saints. Do we also erect churches to the saints?

Pastor—Churches are properly dedicated only to God, though under the title and invocation, and in honor or memory, of the saints. This is done to place the church together with the faithful who assemble in it, under

the special patronage of the saint under whose title it is dedicated, and to excite the faithful to implore the intercession of this particular saint. The different titles which the churches bear serve also to distinguish one from another.

Simon—Was the custom of solemnly consecrating the churches also observed by the primitive Christians?

Pastor—The Christians, who blessed their food, their houses, and whatever they used, could not fail to consecrate or bless their oratories which they destined for divine service. From the time of Constantine, the Christians began to consecrate their newly-built churches with great pomp and solemnity. Great was the rejoicing of the people on such occasions. To assist at this ceremony the neighboring and provincial bishops were frequently convened in council. Thus on the occasion of the consecration of a church in Antioch, in 344, no less than ninety bishops were assembled.

Simon—I have also heard the term “blessing” applied to the dedication of a church. Is there any difference between consecration and blessing?

Pastor—Consecration is the most solemn form of dedicating an edifice to the service of the Almighty, and is only employed when every guarantee is furnished that the building shall never be used for profane purposes. When a church is not secured against the danger of being turned to profane uses, it is only blessed, so that the holy sacrifice may be offered in it.—Unless serious difficulties prevent, our churches are always so situated that the sanctuary or altar is placed at the eastern end of the building.

Simon—What is the reason of this?

Pastor—The ancient Christians frequently turned their faces towards the east at prayers, as an emblem of their hope of resurrection. Moreover, the sun daily rises in the east, to fill the earth with its light and warmth. Our light and our sun is Christ, who came into the world to free it from the darkness and shadow of death. This is most appropriately typi

fied by placing the altar, upon which Christ daily descends in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and where he deigns constantly to dwell in the most holy Eucharist, towards that part of the heavens where the light of the sun daily appears.

Simon—I had never noticed before that our church is also constructed in this manner. Was the arrangement of the ancient churches the same as that of the churches of our day?

Pastor—Before the main entrance of the church there was a spacious porch, where the first class of penitents stood; hence this part of the building was commonly called the “weeper’s station.” The interior of the church was divided as follows: The first part, next to the door, was called the *narthex*, and to it the catechumens and the second class of penitents, called the *audientes*, were admitted. This was known as the “hearers’ station.” From this portion doors or gates led into the nave, or body of the church. Near the doors, at which a subdeacon was always stationed to preserve order, stood the third class of penitents. In the middle of the nave was the *ambo*, or pulpit, large enough to contain several readers or singers. Here the epistle and gospel were read or sung, and sometimes the bishops preached from the *ambo*. The space between the ambo and the sanctuary was allotted to the faithful and the fourth class of penitents, called the co-standers. In the middle of the sanctuary, which was of semi-circular shape, stood the altar, and in the rear of the altar, in the semicircular upper end, called the *apsis*, were the seats of the bishop and the clergy. At the moment of the consecration the altar was concealed from the view of the people by movable curtains or veils.

Simon—When the blessing of the church is terminated, I presume holy Mass may be celebrated in it.

Pastor—Yes, for then it is set apart as the house of God. Here I must also tell you something about the altar upon which the Holy Sacrifice is offered. Before Mass may be cele-

brated on the altar, it must first be consecrated by the bishop. In the centre of the stone slab forming the top of the altar a cavity is made, and into this some relics of martyrs are placed by the bishop who consecrates it; if possible, some relics of the saint in whose name the church is dedicated, are also included.

Simon—Why is this done?

Pastor—The following is the origin of this custom: I have already told you that during the times of the persecutions the faithful were accustomed to assemble for divine worship in underground caverns or crypts, called catacombs, which were at the same time the burial-places of the Christians. It was their wont to turn the tombs or sarcophagi of the martyrs into altars, and to offer the Holy Sacrifice upon them. When peace was restored, the faithful loved to build their churches upon the places hallowed by the remains of the martyrs; these structures were arranged in such a manner that the altar came to stand immediately over the tomb of the martyr. However precious the stones and metals which were employed to ornament the churches, and particularly their altars, nothing was deemed as precious and valuable as the sacred remains of the glorified servants of God, and their tombs were regarded as the most worthy spots upon which to celebrate the holy mysteries of religion. As the number of Christians began rapidly to increase, it happened that churches were needed in localities where no martyrs were buried, or that their tombs were found in places where no churches were required, or where their location was inconvenient. Recourse was therefore had to another expedient. Whenever a church was erected in a locality where there was no tomb of a martyr, some relics of martyrs were taken from elsewhere, and transferred to the new church, and deposited in the altar. It thus happened that the altars were not erected over the actual tombs of the saints, but the altars themselves were made to serve as tombs for the remains of

the martyrs. This is the custom even of the present day. The small square cavity in the top slab of the altar, in which the relics are put, is called "sepulchrum," or sepulchre.

Simon—Are relics of the saints put into all the altars even at present?

Pastor—Yes; and the discipline of the Church in this respect is so strict that it is forbidden to celebrate Mass upon an altar in which there are no relics. At present the Church prescribes that the altar be of stone, or at least that a small stone, called "altar-stone," be inserted in that part of the altar where the chalice and the Sacred Host are placed; in this "altar-stone" the relics are contained. Missionary priests, who are often obliged to say Mass in private houses, always carry such small stone slabs, called "portable altars," with them, and upon these they celebrate the Holy Sacrifice.

Simon—Were the altars not always of stone?

Pastor—In ancient times, especially during the days of persecution, altars were for the most part made of wood, and its name, "*Mensa Domini*," table of the Lord, recalls the table of the Last Supper, at which Christ instituted the Most Holy Eucharist. In the church of St. John Lateran a wooden altar is yet preserved, upon which St. Peter is said to have celebrated Mass. When the persecutions ceased, altars were almost exclusively constructed of stone, although not unfrequently gold and silver, and even precious stones, entered into their composition, especially in the fifth century. The Council of Epaon, held in the year 517, forbade any permanent altars to be consecrated that were made of any material other than stone.—The position of the altar in ancient times was different from that of the present day. I have already told you that it was placed before the apsis, or in the centre of what we call the chancel or sanctuary. The officiating priest stood behind the altar, facing the congregation, and in the rear of the altar the seats of the bishop

and of the rest of the clergy were ranged along the wall. The only ornaments of the altar, besides the altar linens, were a crucifix in the centre, with a candlestick on either side. In the catacombs the altar stood under an arch (*arcasolium*). In the period from 300–1000 this arch was replaced in the churches by a superstructure resting upon columns, forming a baldachin or canopy, and covering the whole of the altar. This cap or dom-shaped baldachin or canopy was called ciborium; from its centre depended the vessel, frequently in the shape of a dove, containing the Blessed Sacrament, which now is reserved in the tabernacle.* The baldachin was provided with movable curtains, by means of which the priest could be concealed from general view at the moment of consecration. During this period the relics of the martyrs were kept, either in crypts under the altar (called *confessio*, *subconfessio*) or in the altar, especially when formed after the manner of the sarcophagi of the catacombs, or over the altar. Towards the end of the tenth or the beginning of the eleventh century material changes took place in the arrangement of the altar, brought about, it seems, by the constantly growing veneration of the saints in that period. About this time it became customary to place the relics of the saints upon the altar in costly and skilfully-wrought shrines or reliquaries. For this purpose the baldachin or canopy was generally removed, and the altar

* There are some who maintain that the baldachin derived its name "ciborium" from the circumstance that the sacred vessel containing the Blessed Sacrament was suspended from it, and that this vessel was called ciborium from the Latin *cibus*, food. This is an error, for the word *ciborium* was known and in use among the ancients (Horat., "Carm.," b. ii. ol. 7, *ciboria*=cups), and the custom of suspending the vessel from the canopy was not the only mode of reserving the Blessed Sacrament. It is more probable that the Christian ciborium owes its name to the Greek word *kiborion*, the cup-shaped husk or pod of the Egyptian *kolocasia* (commonly called Egyptian bean), which was sometimes used as a cup.

placed against the rear wall. At the back edge of the *mensa* or table of the altar, a wall (*retabulum*) was erected, as a termination or background to the altar, and within or upon this the reliquaries were placed. This altered arrangement necessitated another change: the officiating priest no longer stood in the rear of the altar, but in front of it, with his back to the people, turning to the congregation only when addressing them, for instance, at the "Dominus vobiscum," "Orate fratres," and "Ite, Missa est." The seats of the clergy were now placed at the sides of the sanctuary.—The general abolition of the baldachin altars, from which were suspended the vessels containing the Blessed Sacrament, necessitated also a change in the manner of reserving the Blessed Sacrament. For this purpose shrines or armories (*armorialium*) were constructed in the sanctuary, either in the side wall of the church or projecting from it. The usual place for these tabernacles or shrines was on the gospel side of the altar. From the beginning of the sixteenth century it became the general rule to place the tabernacle in the middle of the altar, and such is the prescribed arrangement of the Church to-day. The relics of saints, whenever exposed for veneration, are placed upon the altar on either side of the tabernacle.

Thomas—Concerning the veneration of relics of the saints I have heard and read so much, that I am really at a loss to know what to think of it.

Pastor—Thomas, you have already confessed that in your travels you visited the houses in which celebrated men were born, or in which they lived; are not these relics? And if you could have seen their bodies, their bones, or their clothes, would these have been less worthy of your attention? Men reverently preserve the hats and swords of great military heroes, or treasure the pen with which statesmen signed their names; and the very people who reproach us Catholics with venerating the relics of the saints, do not hesitate to visit

these things, and look upon them with a certain kind of awe. Why, even the ink-spot left upon the wall by the author of the Reformation, Martin Luther, does not escape their attention, and is honored with frequent visits. And parts of the bedstead in which he slept, in the castle of Wittenberg, have been repeatedly renewed, because his admirers would cut off small pieces, and carry them away as sacred relics. But if a Christian hero has faithfully and valiantly battled for Christ and has poured out his blood in evidence of his religious convictions, we are found fault with, if we, who do battle for the same cause and profess the same faith, honor and hold in sacred veneration the relics of our predecessor and fellow-soldier.

It is natural to the cultured man to venerate the remains of distinguished persons, and if we cease to honor those who, by their sanctity and the faithful fulfilment of their religious duties, rendered themselves worthy of our veneration, we will soon turn our attention elsewhere, and not infrequently bestow our veneration upon those less worthy of it.

Thomas—Is the veneration of relics in the Catholic Church really as old as you stated awhile ago?

Pastor—We still possess a letter of the Christians of Smyrna, in which they relate that they gathered the bones of their holy bishop, Polycarp, from among the ashes, after his martyrdom, and preserved them in a becoming and decent receptacle. They declare that they prize these relics more than gold, and appreciate them more highly than all precious stones, and add, furthermore, that when once the persecutions of the Christians should have ceased, they would come together to celebrate with joyous festivities the day of the death of the saint, as his happy birthday; in the first place, to honor the memory of St. Polycarp, and, in the second place, as an example and encouragement for the rest of the faithful, that they, too, might show the same constancy of faith. These are about the words of this

ancient document of Christian sentiment. Frequently the Christians sought to gain possession of the bodies of the holy martyrs, while these were being watched by the pagan soldiery after their martyrdom; not unfrequently they purchased their sacred remains at a high price from the heathen judges and executioners, who, thirsting no less for gold than for blood, made a business of the sale of the bodies of the martyrs to the Christians. The latter even went to the places of execution, where the saints of God were shedding their blood, and with cloths and sponges soaked up the blood streaming from their wounds. Cities eagerly contended for the possession of their bodies, and divided them among each other.

Thomas—Well, no one can reasonably find fault with the Christians for thus striving to afford an honorable burial to the bodies of their brethren, and if necessary even to purchase them with gold. Neither can one find fault with their desire to possess a memento of those who, in so sublime and heroic a manner, gave up their lives for the faith. Still, all this was not a veneration such as is shown to the relics of the saints at the present day.

Pastor—The primitive Christians by no means preserved these relics as mere memorials, but they venerated them in reality as something sacred in their churches, and upon their altars, by prayer and religious ceremonies, and even betook themselves to the tombs and remains of the saints, in order to find help in needs of body and soul. It was looked upon as a special happiness to be permitted to touch them, and the faithful were exhorted to show these relics religious veneration. St. Jerome, in the book he wrote against the heretic Vigilantius, states that Constantine the Great transferred the relics of St. Luke, St. Andrew, and St. Timothy to Constantinople, and “in the presence of these remains”—these are his own words—“the infernal spirits howled with wrath.” In like manner the venerable Paulinus of Nola, in the fifth

century, gives testimony to the piety and confidence with which the Christians had recourse to the tomb of the holy martyr Felix, in their distress. "We daily witness how vast throngs of those in good health there offer up vows, and how the sick ask for and obtain health of body."

Thomas—From your language one would almost believe that you even defend the practice of touching relics with rosaries, crosses, pictures, and other things.

Pastor—We at least know from the Acts of the Apostles (xix. 12) that God wrought special miracles by the handkerchief and apron of St. Paul, which the faithful brought to the sick and those possessed of evil spirits. The practice of touching various articles to the relics of the saints was by no means unusual among the early Christians, and the most enlightened Fathers of the Church exhort the faithful to do so. From this, however, we are not to infer that an inherent virtue passes from the relics to the things touching them. The relics of the saints possess no such virtue in themselves. God alone can work and does work through them, in order thus to crown the merits of his saints, to encourage us to invoke them, to reward the confidence of the pious faithful, and to further the cause of religion in the eyes of men. Thus in working special miracles by means of the handkerchief of St. Paul, God wished to lend consideration to the person of the apostle in the eyes of the pagans, and to stamp his teachings with the mark and seal of truth. If, therefore, devout Christians touch the relics of the saints with various articles, in order by the use of these objects to obtain special help, or the granting of their prayers, this only expresses, in a marked manner, the confidence they have in the intercession of this saint, as well as the hope that God will grant their prayer in view of the merits of the saints.

Thomas—But the relics are not the saints themselves; they are but their lifeless remains. How can one, then, look for or obtain help through them?

Pastor—The hem of the garment of Christ was not Christ himself, and yet we know that the sick woman was healed by merely touching the hem of the garment ; and the shadow of the apostle was not the apostle himself, and yet the people brought out their sick that this shadow might fall upon them, and that they might be healed. God works in manifold ways to glorify his servants. Should not the remains of a saint effect as much as his shadow? His soul, it is true, has departed from his body, and has left it a lifeless corpse upon earth ; but it is no stranger to it ; the relics or bones are parts of that body with which the same soul is again to be clothed on the day of resurrection ; the parts of a body that have shared in the battle and in the victory of eternal life, that was the instrument of all its good deeds and of the last struggle for faith and virtue. There is but one voice concerning the miraculous virtue of sacred relics throughout Christian antiquity ; a long list of holy writers tells us of how, at the tombs of the martyrs, devils were cast out, sick of every kind were healed, and manifold graces were obtained by the faithful. Could the early Christians possibly have come to this firm conviction if universal experience had not warranted it?

Thomas—Is it not probable that many of the relics that are held in religious veneration are spurious, and that they do not at all belong to the saints to whom they are ascribed?

Pastor—There are, no doubt, numerous relics in the hands of the faithful concerning whose identity the necessary proofs are wanting ; but if their genuineness cannot be established, it is no less difficult to demonstrate their spuriousness, and even if one or the other relic should not belong to the saint to whom it is ascribed, yet the veneration shown to it by the faithful is intended for the saint whose remains they believe they have before them. This would, at most, be a harmless error. But the Catholic Church can in no manner be accused of negligence or carelessness in this matter, for no relics are

permitted to be exposed for public veneration concerning whose genuineness any reasonable doubts exist. It is particularly forbidden to enclose any relics in the altar-stone, without having the utmost certainty of their origin. The Church does not even content herself with this safeguard; for, if only the seal of the bishop, which is stamped upon the case containing the relics in the altar-stone, is in any way injured or broken, the holy sacrifice of the Mass can no longer be celebrated upon it, however certain one may be that the relics themselves have not been tampered with.

Simon—Then the feast of the dedication is a remembrance of the day on which the church was consecrated by the bishop, and used for the first time for religious purposes.

Pastor—It is as you say; and this recollection should animate us to renewed gratitude for the happiness of having in our midst a temple of God, and should fill us anew with awe and reverence for God's holy house. Therefore on this day, as well as on the day of the dedication itself, an extract from the Apocalypse is read at Mass, in which St. John (xxi. 2, 3) says: "I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a great voice from the throne, saying: Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people." And in the gospel of the Mass we hear the words which Christ spoke to Zacheus: "This day I must abide in thy house" (Luke xix. 5). How much reason have we to be thankful to God for possessing an edifice devoted to his holy service? How many people must still content themselves, as did the early Christians, with some simple hall, or perhaps even with some ill-suited barn; how many must walk miles in order to be able to hear Mass, to receive religious instruction and the holy sacraments. Yes, many cannot enjoy these advantages, even if they would gladly purchase them at the price of great inconvenience, for numbers are visited only once or

twice a year by the priest from a distance, to administer to them the consolations of religion, and then they are deprived of them for a long time. Shame upon the Christians who have a church near them, and do not feel themselves stimulated frequently to visit it, or who by their indifference neglect to contribute towards its maintenance, and thus give evidence that they do not know how to appreciate the boon of having a house of God near at hand! Our Divine Lord came down from heaven for our sake, and many of those whom he has redeemed, are too fond of their comfort and convenience to go as far as the church for his sake. Moreover, the Church rests by no means satisfied with her children, if they merely stop short of actual neglect in visiting the church. It is her wish that they should gain the benefits and blessings which a Christian temple in their midst may confer upon them, and constant and diligent attendance is precisely the proper manner of showing their gratitude for possessing a church. In the epistle referred to above (Apoc. xxi.) we read: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor wailing, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away." These words, it is true, apply to the future state of bliss; still they are verified, in a certain sense, even here below, in every pious Christian that visits the house of God with becoming dispositions. God is ever ready to wipe away tears, and to assuage sorrow and suffering, if, with confident hearts, we have recourse to him in his holy temple. And if we imitate the example of Zacheus, who said: "Behold, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold"—that is to say, if we form holy resolutions in the temple of God, to amend our lives, and to practise good works, there will also apply to us the words of the Saviour in the gospel already referred to: "This day is salvation come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham."

Simon—Truly, there is an excellent manner of commemorating the dedication of a church, and one ought to deem it a happy privilege to be permitted to contribute to the erection or maintenance of an edifice in which such inestimable blessings are conferred upon us.

Pastor—The feast of the dedication of a church has furthermore a higher moral signification, applicable to the soul, which, according to the words of St. Paul (1 Cor. iii. 16), is a temple of God, and a dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost. Holy baptism is the solemn consecration of our soul as a temple of God. The foundation of this spiritual temple is the virtue of faith, which is infused in baptism; its tower is the virtue of hope, which elevates us to God, and its altar is the virtue of charity, by which we offer ourselves and all pertaining to us, as a sacrifice to God. The pillars and columns are the other Christian virtues, and the roof that surmounts the temple of our soul is the powerful protection of the Almighty, who watches over us with his all-directing providence. Let the ornament and decoration of the walls of the church be for you an emblem of the purity and sanctity you received in holy baptism, and strive to adorn your souls with the virtues of a pure and holy life. In such a temple God will indeed be pleased to dwell. But be also mindful of what the apostle furthermore says in the passage I cited before: "If any man violate the temple of God (in his soul), him shall God destroy"; that is to say, God shall fearfully punish him who pollutes the temple of the Holy Ghost—namely, his soul—by sin and vice, especially by the abomination of impurity.

Simon—I once heard that churches are desecrated by certain crimes, and that, if any of these have been committed in them, they have to be again consecrated. Is this really so?

Pastor—Yes; if, for instance, homicide is committed, or human blood is spilt in a church, or an act of impurity is

perpetrated within it, it is regarded as having been polluted and desecrated. In that case it is forbidden to offer the Holy Sacrifice, or to hold divine service in it. The altars are dismantled, and the doors closed, and the church must again be blessed with holy water, in which salt, ashes, and wine are mixed, before the Holy Sacrifice may be again offered in it.

Thomas—But this seems to me really an exaggeration. Surely no fault can attach to the stones of the building, if a crime is committed in a church. Can an irrational and inanimate object be polluted by sin in the same manner as is a rational being?

Pastor—The Church does not by any means wish to convey the idea that the walls or pavement, which constitute the lifeless building, have been polluted in a moral sense, like a human soul; but she observes the ceremony of reconsecrating or reconciling a church that has been desecrated by a criminal act, from a higher, spiritual motive. In the first place, she seeks thereby to fill the hearts of the faithful with fear and horror of those disgraceful vices, by which, in her eyes, a church is changed into an object of loathing and disgust; just as in ancient times the dwelling of a great criminal was levelled with the earth, and the spot where it stood strewn with salt. Of course the ground where the house stood was in no manner responsible for the criminal deed, but the destruction of the dwelling was intended to express the utter detestation of the criminal act, and to increase the horror of it in the minds of the people. Secondly, by this renewed blessing of a temple that has been desecrated, the Church would present to all sinners a type or figure of the sacrament of penance.—The first dedication of a church is called “consecration”; this is performed by the bishop, and cannot be repeated as long as the church continues to exist in its principal parts. This consecration, therefore, is a true figure or type of baptism, by which the

soul is dedicated as a temple of God, and which likewise cannot be repeated. The rededication or blessing of a polluted church is not called "consecration," but "reconciliation"; and this is a figure of the sacrament of penance, by which the temple of the soul, polluted and infected with sin, is again purified and reconciled with God.

Simon—What is the meaning of mixing salt, ashes and wine with the water?

Pastor—This water is called "Gregorian water," because it was first ordained by Pope Gregory the Great (in the fifth century) to be employed in the consecration of a church. The wine and water is a type of the union of the divinity and humanity of Christ. The ashes are a figure of mortality, and the salt, which preserves from corruption, here signifies immortality. The ashes and the salt denote man, who is composed of a perishable body and an immortal soul; wine and water represent the incarnate Son of God, with whom we are to be united by faith and charity, and the graces of the sacraments which we are to receive in the church about to be consecrated. This water, having been employed on the occasion of the consecration of the church, is also used in its reconciliation.

Simon desired to know something about the blessing of the bells; another asked what was the meaning of the weather-vane at the point of the spire, and Thomas was anxious to speak about the images in churches.

It was the opinion of the pastor that besides these things many other objects would have to be explained, and he thought it best, therefore, to defer their discussion for the next meeting.

CHAPTER XIV.

Feast of the Dedication of a Church (continued).

PASTOR—This evening I shall answer the questions you put to me at our last conference. But before speaking of the bells, you must permit me to tell you something about the tower, in which the bells are suspended. Do you know that the tower or spire of the church has also a figurative signification? It rises far above the dwellings, and above the church itself, and may be compared to a finger pointing heavenwards, whither we should direct all our thoughts and aspirations. The more men are inclined to attach themselves to the earth, by reason of their daily cares and labors, the more do they stand in need of the services of such a preacher of stone, that unceasingly reminds them to “seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, and to mind the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth” (Col. iii. 1, 2). The spire likewise silently exhorts men to be as firm in the observance of the commandments, and as unshaken in the discharge of their duties, and the keeping of their good resolutions, as the tower rests firmly and immovably upon its foundations; and manfully and fearlessly to confess before the world Christ crucified, whose sacred emblem gloriously crowns the point of the spire.

Simon—To remind us of this is, no doubt, the object of the cross on the spire of the church.

Pastor—At least in part. The cross serves also as a characteristic or distinctive mark of the Catholic Church, while

at the same time proclaiming the victory of Him crucified over sin, and death, and infidelity. Now let me tell you something about the bells which are suspended in the towers.

Simon—I once read something about the age and origin of bells, but cannot now recall it to mind.

Pastor—Bells are of great antiquity, being mentioned in the book of Exodus, chapter xxviii., in which golden bells are prescribed as appendages to the dress of the high-priest, that notice might thus be given of his approach to the sanctuary. Some attribute the introduction of the use of bells in divine worship in the Catholic Church to St. Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, in Campania, about the year 400 ; and hence, they say, the name of *campana* was given to the larger kind of bells, and the name of *nola* to the smaller ones. Others ascribe their introduction to Pope Sabinian, in the year 604. It is certain that for the first three or four centuries the Christians could not make use of these instruments, for fear of attracting the attention of their pagan enemies, and thus betraying to them their place of meeting. During the time of the persecutions, when the faithful were compelled to assemble for divine service with as little noise or display as possible, it was the office of the deacons and perhaps others, to give notice from house to house, both of the time and place of meeting, for the latter had frequently to be changed as a measure of safety. When peace and liberty of worship was accorded to the Church by Constantine the Great, the Christians constructed temples and churches, but they did not yet make use of bells to announce the hour of divine service. Instead of bells it was customary to employ sounding-boards, called *semantrons*, which used to be struck with a mallet of hard wood. You know that we have still a remnant of this ancient custom in the wooden clappers of Holy Week. Before bells were introduced the monks were summoned to assemble by the sound of a trumpet.

Even up to the present day the Turks have neither bells nor instruments in their places of worship, but one of their priests ascends a high tower, and by loud cries calls the Mussulmans to assemble for prayer in the mosque.

Simon—Without bells and without an organ, it seems to me, divine service would lose much of its attraction.

Pastor—The use of organs in the Church is still more recent, partly because they were too costly in the beginning, and partly because the Sovereign Pontiffs were averse to innovations in the arrangement of the churches. Their gradual spread in the West is probably due to the gift of an organ by the Greek Emperor Constantine Copronymus, to Pepin, King of the Franks, in 757. Charlemange, son of Pepin, afterwards had one constructed for the church in Aix-la-Chapelle. From the thirteenth century the use of organs became general in the Church of the West. In the East they are not used in divine service even to-day. In the Papal Chapel in Rome the organ is still excluded, the music being rendered by a choir of male voices, unaided by any instrument. It is not to be denied, however, that the organ, in proper hands, contributes greatly to the solemnity of divine worship, and materially aids the singers. Unfortunately the operatic style of music rendered in most of the churches of the present day, tends more to tickle and gratify the ear, than to awaken sentiments of piety and devotion in the heart. It is to be hoped sincerely that the efforts, which have been made for some years past, to banish from the house of God all worldly music, and to re-introduce in its stead the sublime music of the Church, will soon meet with universal appreciation, and be crowned with success.

Simon—What is the meaning of the blessing of the bells?

Pastor—The Church, as you know, blesses everything she uses in the service of God, and as the bells are destined for a pious and holy purpose, she also dedicates them for this ob-

ject by certain rites or ceremonies. The object of the bells is expressed in an old Latin verse :

*“ Laudo Deum verum, plebem voco, congreco clerum
Defunctos ploro, nimbos fugo, festaque honoro.”*

The meaning of this verse is :

I praise God, call the people, convoke the clergy,
Mourn the dead, dispel the clouds, and announce the feasts.

The first object, then, of the bells is to announce the glory of God ; hence the faithful are invited by the ringing of the bell to adore the Blessed Sacrament, at the moment of the elevation or benediction, or when the Blessed Sacrament is carried to the sick. They serve, secondly, to convoke the people and the clergy for the celebration of Holy Mass and other devotions. They, thirdly, remind us to pray for the departed, when the bells are tolled at their death or burial. The Church, fourthly, prays at the blessing of the bells, that through them the faithful might be preserved from the harm of storms and tempests. Finally, they serve to announce the feasts of God and his saints. Because the bells are destined for these different purposes, or because, in one word, they are dedicated to the purposes of divine worship, they are, in accordance with the direction of the Church, first solemnly blessed. Indeed, formerly the persons appointed to ring the bells had to be in the ranks of the clergy.

Simon—You will be good enough to explain to us some of the ceremonies employed in blessing the bells.

Pastor—The bells are washed and cleansed with holy water, both inside and outside. This is to express the wish that the bell might be a clean instrument of a pure and holy religion. By this ceremony the faithful are to be furthermore reminded that, as the sound of this inanimate bell is to go forth to the praise of God only from pure and sanctified metal, so, in a still higher degree, must the prayers and praises

of Christians come from pure hearts and clean lips. The blessing of the bells likewise tell us that we are not worthy to appear in the sight of God in his holy temple, and to take part in the sacred mysteries of our religion, if we have lost the purity and innocence of baptism, and have defiled our souls with sin ; we must first cleanse and purify ourselves by penance, before we presume to open our lips in the praise of God, just as the bell is first washed and cleansed before it is permitted to send forth a sound in the service of God. The bell is, moreover, anointed with oil and chrism, not unlike the manner in which a child is anointed in baptism. The holy oil signifies the power of the Holy Ghost, and the chrism denotes the gracious merits of Jesus Christ. The inanimate metal of the bell is not, it is true, susceptible of the graces of Jesus Christ, or of the power of the Holy Ghost, but in this unction the Church has in view the faithful themselves. The psalms and prayers recited by the clergy implore of the Almighty that, as often as we make use of these bells, he would be mindful of the precious merits of his Divine Son ; that, in view of the same, he would, by the power of the Holy Ghost, dissipate hurtful storms, and banish the spirit of sloth from the faithful, as often as they are called to prayer and divine worship by the sound of the bell ; and that he would also shorten the time of suffering of the souls of the faithful departed, as often as the bell is tolled in their memory, and whenever the living upon earth send up for them their prayers.

Besides the first unction, the new bell is anointed seven times more on the outside with oil, and four times on the inside with chrism. This sevenfold unction may have reference to the words of the royal prophet : "Seven times a day I give praise to thee, O Lord !" (Psalm cxviii.) And then the Divine Office recited by the clergy, and to which they are summoned by the bell, consists of seven Canonical Hours. The fourfold unction of the interior of the bell

with chrism may be said to denote that the sound of the bell is to go forth to the four points of the compass, and to remind Jew and Gentile of the name of Christ, of his teachings, and the holy mysteries of his religion which are preached and celebrated within the Christian temple.—Every Christian, having been baptized and anointed with holy chrism, may be said, in a certain sense, to be a living bell, upon whom, consequently, the obligation rests of announcing Christ, his Saviour, either by the sound of his words, or, at least, by the example of his virtuous life.

The name of a saint is also given to the bell. The first object of this may be to distinguish the different bells that are suspended in the same tower. Another reason, no doubt, is the wish to place the bell, as well as the church, under the protection of the saints. Whenever we hear a bell, we may picture to ourselves that the saint after whom the bell is named calls us to the service and praise of God. So-called sponsors are present at the blessing of the bells, but their function is only that of witnesses to the ceremony.

Finally, a vessel with burning incense is placed beneath the bell. This is to symbolize the devout prayers to which the new bell is to assemble the faithful. Prayer, in the language of Holy Writ, is often likened to the agreeable odor of frankincense.

To conclude the whole ceremony, the deacon sings the gospel taken from the tenth chapter of St. Luke, in which it is related how Martha received the Saviour into her house, and entertained him, whilst Mary seated herself at the feet of the Redeemer, and with rapt attention listened to the words that fell from his divine lips. The reason why this gospel is read or sung at the blessing of a bell is, 1) because to the newly-blessed bell a place is now assigned in the house of God, just as Martha and Mary received the Saviour into their own house; and 2) to remind us that at the call of the bell we should appear in the house

of God, and present ourselves at his sacred banquet, with the same eagerness with which the devout sisters Martha and Mary received the Redeemer at their table, to be fed by him with the bread of eternal life.

Thomas—I confess that, where these blessings have only a figurative signification, I must accord to them my approbation. But, really, there are so many blessings used in the Church, that one would imagine that everything in the world was evil and corrupt, and needed first to be sanctified by a special blessing.

Pastor—I will take occasion here to explain this matter a little at length. As man became evil and corrupt in consequence of sin, so, indeed, everything that surrounds him, and everything of which he makes use, became, in a certain sense, bad and corrupt. As man rebelled against his Creator, so everything in this world in turn rebelled against him; for one of the penalties of man's sin was the curse pronounced by God upon the whole of creation. Man had now to contend against the elements; the soil yielded him thorns and thistles, and afforded him the necessary sustenance of life only at the cost of painful labor; the animals which were to serve him, now feared him and fled from him, or even assailed him; the herbs of the field either became noxious to him, or at least lost some of their healing properties.—But not only for the body, but also for the soul, the whole surroundings of man became harmful. For as man made a slave of himself to Satan by sin, so, in like manner, he subjected everything that was created for his use to the service of Satan; like the forbidden fruit of Paradise, so everything in the world now became a means in the hands of Satan to tempt man to evil, and everything afforded occasion of sin to the perverted and evil inclinations of man—wine became an occasion of drunkenness; gold became the occasion of avarice, robbery, and murder. Now, in order to show how, through the Christian religion, everything may again be turned to

good and may become an occasion for our sanctification, and in order, by prayer to God, to remove the harm which the various objects in the world may possess for our soul or body, we bless them before we make use of them ; in other words, we pronounce a prayer over them, or make over them the sign of the cross. Therefore St. Paul says that not only man, but the whole material creation longs for its deliverance, which is to come when sin shall reign no more (Rom. viii. 19). And on another occasion he says : "Every creature of God is good, . . . for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5). Thus, for instance, when about to partake of our meals, we beg God to bless our food and drink. But our confidence that God will hear our prayer is incomparably greater when, in union with all the faithful of the whole Church, we beseech our Heavenly Father, in view of the merits of his Divine Son, to purify and sanctify the various objects destined for our daily use, and to remove from them everything hurtful, than if we appeal to him individually. We may pray for one another, but this is not the united prayer of all the faithful. This united prayer of the Church is offered whenever the priest, in her name and by her commission, pronounces a blessing upon food, wax, oil, salt, etc.; and we particularly prize this prayer, because the Church ever prays in union with Christ. We in no wise believe, however, that these things are possessed of the devil ; but it is our conviction that he can make use of them to tempt us to sin ; now, to free them from his evil influence is the intention of the blessing of the priest. This is what, in the language of the Church, is called *exorcism*.

The Church is not content to free the sensible objects, which we use, from hurtfulness by her prayers, or to withdraw them from the possible evil influence of Satan, but it is her desire to turn everything into a means of spiritual and bodily blessing for her children. Hence she prays, by the

mouth of her minister, that God would graciously grant particular graces and favors to those who make a proper use of these blessed objects. Now, we cannot command the prayer of the whole Church in every instance when we would wish to enjoy it. Therefore the Church utters her prayers in advance, and attaches them to particular sensible objects, in order that whoever may make use of them may also have the benefit of her intercessory prayer. And we make use of the articles blessed by her, such as water, salt, wax, herbs, etc., in full confidence that by their proper and devout use, we shall obtain from God the favors which the Church has begged him to confer upon those making good use of them. If, in a business transaction, we give a written note or order, for a certain sum of money, to some one, the person receiving the order does not possess the money, but he feels assured that our signature will obtain for him the promised sum. This comparison, though perhaps trivial, may enable you fully to understand this matter. For these blessed objects are, in a certain sense, pledges for us that God will, for the sake of the merits of Christ, and the prayers of his holy Church, confer upon us his favors, provided, of course, it be to our true interest, and we make use of these objects with pious sentiments. Therefore, as long as prayer itself, and in particular the intercession of the entire Church, in certain necessities of the faithful, cannot be condemned, so long this peculiar manner in which the Church, by her blessings, offers her intercession in behalf of individuals, can neither be condemned.

Simon—You have repeatedly referred to the Divine Office, or the Canonical Hours. Would you not kindly tell us something about it?

Pastor—In the primitive times of Christianity all the faithful, whose occupations permitted, were wont to assemble several times in the day, to praise God by the singing of the Psalms. The singing of the Psalms was occasionally inter-

rupted, to read some pages from the sacred Scriptures, or extracts from the gospels, of which the bishop would then give an explanation, or cause the explanation of some distinguished bishop or Father of the Church to be read. The Acts of the Martyrs, to which I have several times referred, were also read at these assemblies, and subsequently short accounts of the lives of the saints were added. These prayers and lessons, quite long in themselves, having been considerably augmented by gradual additions, were variously altered and abbreviated in the course of time, and hence the name of *Breviary*, or “shortened prayer.”

Simon—Why is the Divine Office also called “Canonical Hours?”

Pastor—Because this prayer, divided into different parts, is appointed for fixed hours in the day. In the old Law the Jews performed their devotions at certain hours of the day, and the apostles followed this custom. The apostles were assembled for prayer at the *third* hour (that is, at nine o'clock, because it was customary to count the hours of the day from six o'clock in the morning) when the Holy Ghost came down upon them (Acts ii. 15). Of St. Peter we read, in the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, that at the sixth hour (twelve o'clock) “he went up to the higher part of the house to pray.” Peter and John went up to the temple at the ninth hour (three o'clock) of prayer (Acts iii. 1). When Paul and Silas were in prison, they prayed and praised God at midnight (Acts xvi. 25). From this we see that the apostles and early Christians observed certain hours, at which they came together, either in their own dwellings, or, when the state of the times permitted, in public assemblies, for prayer and the praise of God. Subsequently seven distinct hours were appointed for the devotions of the faithful, and the following was the distribution of the service: *Matins*, consisting of Psalms and lessons from the Scriptures, a short homily or a short account of the life of a saint. To the *Matins* are at-

tached the *Lauds* (literally, *praise*)—a series of Psalms in praise of God. Matins and Lauds are recited or sung either at midnight or at 2 o'clock A. M. Matins and Lauds are followed by *Prime* (equivalent to *first hour*), at six o'clock in the morning, and may be called the morning prayer; next comes *Tierce*, or *third hour*, at nine o'clock; this is succeeded by *Sext*, the *sixth hour*, at twelve o'clock, or noon; and *None*, or *ninth hour*, about three o'clock P. M. *Vespers*, with which you are familiar, is the evening devotion; and *Compline*—the completion—is the night prayer. In the course of time the laity ceased to take part in these services. But that a voice might never be wanting, day and night, to sing the praises of God, the Church entrusted the celebration of the Divine Office to the clergy and religious communities, and made this their special *office* or *duty*. To-day the different hours of the Divine Office are still observed by the religious in monasteries, where the Office is recited or chanted in common. The secular clergy is also held to the recitation of the Breviary, without, however, being bound to the observance of the hours named before.

Thomas—I find it strange that the Catholic Church should have imitated and adopted so many Jewish rites and customs, among them also these Canonical Hours.

Pastor—The chief end of this prayer, distributed as it is over the whole day, is to permit no period of the day to pass without being sanctified by the recollections of God. If the customary hours of the Jews have been retained, it was undoubtedly done because this laudable usage was found among them, and there was no good reason to deviate from it. Indeed, several of the hours of the day have become memorable for us in the history of our redemption, and they deserve, therefore, to be distinguished from the others by prayer. It was at the sixth hour that the Jews clamored for the death of Jesus upon the cross (John xix. 14); and it was at the ninth hour that Jesus, crying with a loud voice, gave up the

ghost (Matt. xxvii. 46). It is true, the Church has adopted many rites and usages in her religious service, which God had ordained in the Mosaic law; not because she would thereby go back to Judaism, but because they possessed a moral signification, and were therefore calculated to convey a salutary lesson to the Christians. A few examples may enable you better to understand this.

1) The Catholic Church prescribes that a perpetual lamp—that is, a lamp whose light is never permitted, day or night, to be extinguished—should burn before the tabernacle in which the Blessed Sacrament is preserved. This is in imitation of the perpetual fire which was never to go out upon the altar (Lev. vi. 13). This ever-burning lamp upon our altars is to remind us of the living faith which we should always show to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and of the glowing love and fervent devotion which we should ever bear towards our Divine Lord, and which should never diminish or become extinguished in our hearts.

2) The holy-water font, at the entrance of our churches, may be an imitation of the brazen laver, which, by the command of God, Moses caused to be placed between the tabernacle and the altar (Exod. xxx. 18–21). In this laver Aaron and his sons were to wash their hands and feet before offering incense to the Lord.—We, on the other hand, are to be reminded, by the font of the holy water, of the purity of soul with which we should appear in the sight of God in his holy temple. If we would offer to him the homage of our prayers, we should banish from our thoughts everything that is worldly, and purify our hearts from everything sinful, in order that the eye of God, which is sanctity itself, may find nothing in us that would rather provoke him to wrath than move him to mercy and love towards us.

3) The images of angels which are frequently found in Catholic churches near the monstrance, or tabernacle, resemble the two cherubim which the Lord ordered to be placed

on either side of the Ark of the Covenant. On beholding these images of the angels we are also to call to mind the sentiments with which we must appear before the true and living God in the Most Holy Eucharist ; and they are to exhort us, with angelic modesty and heavenly devotion, to unite our prayers with the devotion of the invisible spirits present on the altar.

4) The manner of observing the Christian festivals—namely, by abstaining from servile work—has, no doubt, come down to us from the Jews. But the Church wishes to admonish us on those days to detach our hearts from all things earthly, and to devote ourselves wholly to the praise and service of God.

Thomas—Certainly, no fault can be found with all this, if only thereby the reproach were not justified, which Protestants so frequently propose—namely, that the Catholic Church has adopted so much from Judaism, and is therefore partly Jewish herself.

Pastor—If the Catholic Church has borrowed some rites and ceremonies from Judaism, and has attached to them a mystic and instructive meaning, in order thereby to edify the Christian people, I cannot see why on that account she should be reproached with being partly Jewish. It is true, Judaism has been rejected by God, and the Mosaic ceremonial law has been abrogated ; but what follows therefrom ? Suppose Protestants were to select from the ruins of some pagan temple, which might by chance be found somewhere, such stones as are still serviceable, and, together with other building material, were to erect a beautiful church in honor of the true God, would any one then presume to assert that they had erected for themselves not a house of Christian worship, but a temple to pagan idols ? By her sacraments, her sacrifice, her laws, and her lawgiver, by her faith in the Redeemer, and her trust in his promises, in virtue of which she expects no earthly or temporal, but an eternal reward and

happiness, the Catholic Church is so far removed from the Jews that a few external rites or ceremonies, which she may have borrowed from Judaism, are far from making her Jewish.

Thomas—It is true ; on rightly considering the matter, there is no good ground for such a reproach. Still, it is my opinion, that we should take Judaism as a model also in other things ; for instance, by excluding from our churches pictures or images.

Pastor—If in the things just spoken of we have a good reason to copy the old law, we have, in the matter you have just mentioned, an excellent reason *not* to follow it. We make use of images or pictures of Christ and his saints : 1) To embellish and adorn our churches, just as you adorn the walls of a hall, that they may present a pleasant appearance ; 2) To instruct the faithful, and to animate them with pious sentiments. Not only for the ignorant who cannot read, but also for the learned, who for the moment are indisposed to read, pictures serve instead of a book. Besides, images have this great advantage over books, that they convey the idea expressed in the painting far more vividly and more impressively. That which we behold in reality or in a picture moves and effects our imagination more powerfully than that which we simply hear or read of ; it is more easily understood, and better retained by the memory. Therefore we can never realize the life and sufferings of Christ, the mysteries of our holy religion, or the charming examples of virtue in the lives of the saints nearly as well in a book as in a painted representation. And hence it is far easier to instruct children in the history of the Bible, by showing them the particular events of this history in descriptive pictures, than by merely relating them. 3) Images serve to honor Christ and his saints. We do not, assuredly, adorn our dwellings with the portraits of those whom we hold in contempt ; but if we keep in our homes the likeness of some one, we thereby

give evidence that we love and esteem him whom the picture represents. Such is the case also with the pictures in our churches. It is not necessary for me to repeat here what I said on a former occasion—namely, that the honor which we show to the picture or image is not bestowed upon the material of which it is made, upon the wood, or stone, or canvas, but that this honor is referred to the persons represented—to Christ or his saints. 4) The sacred images intensify our love and devotion for the original. Never did the most touching sermon on the Passion of our Lord enkindle such heartfelt love as has been produced by the silent spectacle of our Saviour hanging upon the cross. I shall never forget the tears of true sympathy and compassion shed by an old negro woman on beholding for the first time in her life a crucifix in a Catholic church on Good Friday. Involuntarily she sank upon her knees, and exclaiming: “Did my Jesus suffer all this for me?” she embraced and kissed the figure of her Saviour. Finally, 5) The portraits of the saints serve to incite us to imitate the virtues of their holy lives; and this is really the principal object for which they are placed in our churches, or for which we keep them in our dwellings.

Thomas—Still, it cannot be denied that, in the old law, God himself forbade the making of graven images.

Pastor—God forbade the making of graven images, for the very important reasons that the Jews were surrounded on every side by idolatrous nations, who made use of images, not for the purposes we have, but for actual adoration—that is to say, they paid them divine honors. Under these circumstances it was too dangerous a thing to grant the use of images to the Hebrews; for even without images they very often fell into idolatry. That images or pictures are nothing evil in themselves is apparent from the fact that God himself commanded two cherubim to be represented on either side of the Ark of the Covenant.

Thomas—Did the primitive Christians also have pictures or images?

Pastor—For the same prudential reasons assigned above, the early Christians were very cautious in making statues, and very circumspect in exposing them to the gaze of the pagans among whom they lived. On the one hand, there was reason to fear that the newly-made converts from paganism might confound Christian images with the heathen idols, and thus, by force of old habits, again relapse into idolatry; on the other hand there was also the danger of giving occasion to the charge on the part of the pagans that the Christians condemned idolatry in others, while being guilty of it themselves. Besides, as the Christians were frequently compelled to abandon their churches, they no doubt avoided decorating their walls with images, lest they might fall into the hands of the heathens, and be treated with mockery and abuse. But the Catacombs, to which the faithful alone were admitted, give ample evidence of the practice of the early Christians in regard to pictures. Among the pious representations upon the walls of the Catacombs, and which are preserved even to this day, are found the dove, the emblem of the Holy Ghost; the good shepherd, the sacrifice of Isaac, the resurrection of Lazarus, Noe in the ark, the Blessed Virgin and the prophet Isaias, the Blessed Virgin and the Magi, the Blessed Virgin with the infant Saviour, Christ between St. Peter and Paul, Christ as the lamb, etc.

Thomas—If we are, then, to have images and statues in our churches, it seems to me care should at least be taken to procure only such as are really works of art, and to banish those distorted and sometimes grotesque figures which we often encounter.

Pastor—The first and most important requisite undoubtedly is, to take care that no pictures be admitted that give occasion to an erroneous understanding of the doctrines of

the Catholic Church, or that offend against morality or decency. As a matter of course, pictures which, though correct as to faith and morals, are disfigured and distorted, deserve no place in the Church, because instead of edifying and exciting devotion, they occasion only laughter and ridicule, and thus have the very opposite effect to that which they are intended to produce. Now, it would no doubt be most desirable if every church were furnished with real works of art, for it should be the aim of art to honor and glorify God, just as all the works of man should glorify his Maker. But as long as there are not sufficient works of art to supply all the churches, and as long as men prefer to expose those actually existing, in museums and art-galleries, to the gaze of the curious, rather than to place them in churches for the edification of pious visitors, many congregations will have to be content with less valuable works. Moreover, the veneration of pious works of art is a very peculiar thing. Very many show them an honor and veneration which, it is evident, has reference rather to the artist than to the subject represented by the painting. If there is question of a picture of the Blessed Virgin, or, to use an expression which has a little more *ton*, of a "Madonna by Raphael," many are, or at least seem to be, full of admiration and enthusiasm, because such is the fashion; but if honor is to be shown to the Blessed Virgin, represented in the picture, many of these enthusiastic admirers silently withdraw, and thus show that they really honored more the artist than the personages represented, and that, perhaps, they were even guilty of a certain kind of idolatry which may be called *art-worship*.

Thomas—As regards idolatry, we have often enough to hear this charge made against us by Protestants, who accuse us of praying to images.

Pastor—This charge of idolatry has been refuted time and again. To show its utter falsehood, I need only quote what the Church has solemnly pronounced on this subject, in the

General Council of Trent. She says : "The images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God, and the other saints, are to be kept and retained, particularly in the churches, and due honor and veneration is to be paid them, *not that we believe that there is any divinity or power in them*, for which we respect them, or that anything is to be asked of them, or that trust is to be placed in them, as the heathens of old trusted in their idols" (Sess. 25). Even Martin Luther, with all his opposition to the Catholic Church, could find no idolatry in her doctrine respecting crosses and images ; on the contrary, he warmly defended it against Carlstadt and his associates, who had destroyed those in the churches of Wittenberg. In the title-pages of his volumes by Melanchthon, the author of the Reformation is exhibited on his knees before a crucifix. Queen Elizabeth of England persisted for many years in retaining a crucifix on the altar of her chapel, till some of her Puritan courtiers engaged Patch, the court fool, to break it, "no wiser man," says Dr. Heylin ("Hist. of Reform.," p. 124), "daring to undertake such a service."* Every Catholic child knows that a sacred image has no intelligence, and that it can neither hear nor help us, and that the honor we show to the picture has reference to the original represented by it. Protestants know this very well, too, and the epithet *idolaters* is not so often applied to us now as it was formerly. They begin to understand the great utility of religious symbols, and begin even to adopt them. Among Protestant churches the Episcopal Church is not the only one that makes use of the cross, but it is now being adopted also by others. Catholics no more pray to images and statues, than Protestants adore the Bible, which we also look upon as a part of divine revelation, and hold in high veneration. When Protestants reverently kiss the Bible, is their veneration intended for the material substance of printed paper and lea-

* Milner's "End of Controversy," let. 34.

ther, or do they revere it because it represents the word of God? Indeed, what is the whole Bible but a collection of pen-pictures? For example, what is the description in the seventh chapter of St. Luke, where the Evangelist portrays Mary Magdalen, in the house of the Pharisee, at the feet of Jesus, giving expression to her compunction and her love in a flood of tears? Is it anything else than a scene pictured true to life? What St. Luke has here sketched with his pen, the painter has copied with his brush; the Evangelist makes use of ink, and the painter employs colors. The pen-picture makes an impression upon my imagination, and creates an image in my soul, just as the painted image does, with this difference, that the impressions of the latter are deeper and more powerful.

Thomas—However true all this may be, still it cannot be denied that the external signs of reverence shown by Catholics to pictures or images must seem exaggerated to the eyes of Protestants, and give rise to the suspicion that, after all, we combine a species of adoration with our veneration of images. Just think of the genuflections before pictures, of the kissing and incensing of the same, and of the burning of tapers before them!

Pastor—There is a very easy method of finding out in what sense we understand these external marks of reverence to the memorials of Christ and his saints—namely, by simply asking the Catholics themselves. If, in certain cases, these external signs *may* be construed into marks of adoration, they may also be construed as simple signs of *veneration*, for all depends upon our *intention*; without taking this into account no correct judgment can be passed upon our conduct. Men bend their knees before emperors, kings, and queens, and kiss their hands, and yet no one thinks for a moment of showing them divine honors. The apostle tells us that “at the name of Jesus every knee shall bend.” Now names are but signs and symbols, and, as such even inferior

to images, because they represent the object much less vividly. The burning of incense before images is partially a symbol of the virtues by which the saints made their lives a sweet odor before God, and an expression of the merits which they gained with him, and partially also a symbol of our prayers which, in union with those of the saints, ascend to the throne of heaven. The burning of tapers or candles before the pictures of saints signifies the esteem and love we cherish for them; they are the special friends of God, and our brethren in Christ Jesus, and we hope one day to be united with them in eternal glory. The halo of light with which we are wont to surround the figures of the saints serves to picture to us the everlasting glory into which the blessed servants of God have entered, and points to the splendor of the beatific vision. The pedestals or thrones upon which we elevate their statues, the crowns with which we encircle their brows, and the palms which we put into their hands, all these denote that they reign for ever with Christ, the Eternal King, in the heavenly kingdom. "The Lord shall enlighten them, and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Apoc. xxii. 5). St. Paul describes the future reward of heaven under the symbol of a crown: "There is laid up for me a crown of justice" 2 Tim. iv. 8). And St. John says of the martyrs, figuratively, that "they stand before the throne of the Lamb, with palms in their hands" (Apoc. vii. 9). All this ought finally to be for us an encouragement and an impressive admonition, sedulously to imitate the virtues of the saints, in order that, having resembled them here on earth, we may also be like unto them in the world to come, and, in union with them, in truth enjoy that glory which here below we represented by the aid of figures and symbols.

Simon—The Feast of All Saints affords us an opportunity to transport ourselves to the society of the blessed, and gives us, so to speak, a foretaste of the joys of heaven.

Pastor—You are right, and in our next conference we

shall occupy ourselves with this feast, as well as with the one immediately following—namely, the Feast of All Souls. For the present let us adjourn our meeting in the name of God.

CHAPTER XV.

Feast of All Saints, and the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed.

PASTOR—You were right, Simon, when, at our last conference, you said that the Feast of All Saints transported us in spirit to the abode of the blessed. And it was probably the intention of the Church, in instituting this festival, that we should, on one day in the year, thoroughly forget the world and all things earthly, and, as it were, pay in spirit a visit to our beatified brothers and sisters. I have already told you that not all the names of the saints in heaven are contained in the calendar. Now, on this day we have an opportunity of showing our veneration to those whose names are unknown to us, but who, no less than those saints with whose names we are familiar, have fought the good fight, and have been admitted to the beatific vision of God. It would, indeed, be deplorable if the majority, or rather all, of our ancestors, and those belonging to us, were not found among the saints in heaven. This day, then, is for us a beautiful Christian family festival, on which in spirit we visit, in the mansions of bliss, the members of our own families; and joy fills our hearts at the thought that those who, perhaps under our own eyes, have borne the heat and burden of the day, have toiled faithfully for heaven, placed their trust in God, and suffered for his sake, now rest from the hardships of this life, and enjoy their eternal inheritance. The occasion may suggest the thought that while we still celebrate this feast on earth, at its next recurrence we may perhaps be numbered among the saints, provided we faithfully persevere

in the service of God and the observance of his holy law. This day serves likewise, more than any other, to remind us that the saints were men like ourselves, born into this world, with the same proneness to sin. They belonged to the same state, age, and sex as ourselves; they had to sustain the same, perhaps even greater, trials and temptations than we do; they had to conquer the same evil inclinations and passions with ourselves; they encountered the same difficulties in the practice of virtue which we meet; they co-operated with the same divine grace given to us; perhaps their measure was even less; and yet they triumphed and won the crown of immortality. All this we might possibly forget, if we celebrated the feasts of saints of distant lands and foreign nations, or of very remote times; but nothing can bring these truths more vividly to our minds than the thought of our own departed kindred. Finally, this thought that so many among the saints were near and dear to us by state, age, sex, origin, and even family ties, will give us the greatest assurance that by their powerful intercession they will support our prayers. Though death has separated them from us, we cannot, certainly, believe that the father has lost the affection for his son, the mother for her child, the husband for his wife, or the friend for his friend; we must rather assume that now they will be interested in our welfare with a far greater and purer love than they ever showed during their earthly lives.

Simon—Truly, this festival is calculated to call forth in us most consoling and edifying thoughts.

Pastor—And the more we give ourselves up to them, the greater fruit we shall derive from its celebration. Now, the following was the occasion of the institution of this festival. In Rome there stood a heathen temple originally erected in honor of Jupiter, but afterwards dedicated to all the gods, and hence it received the name of Pantheon. This masterpiece of architecture is a half-globe, its height being almost

equal to its breadth ; the diameter is one hundred and fifty-eight feet. It has neither pillar nor window, but only a large round opening in the centre at the top, which admits the light. The Emperor Theodosius, in the beginning of the fifth century, demolished all the temples of idols in the East, while in the West the more remarkable were shut up, but permitted to remain standing as monuments of the former magnificence of the empire. When idolatry has been long enough banished to make its revival improbable, these edifices were in some instances purified and converted into churches for the worship of the true God. Pope Boniface IV. caused the Pantheon to be cleansed and opened, and in 607 dedicated it in honor of the Blessed Virgin and the martyrs, and, it is said, deposited within it twenty-eight wagon-loads of relics of the martyrs taken from the Catacombs. At first the festival of All Saints was observed only in Rome, but through the efforts of Pope Gregory IV., in 834, its observance was extended to the whole Church.

Now let us turn our attention to the COMMEMORATION OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED, or ALL SOULS' DAY, immediately following the beautiful feast of All Saints. If in spirit we transport ourselves to the abode of the saints, we shall not find among them every one of those who, while on earth, lived for God, and gained for themselves eternal life. A great number of these, on being called hence, were not found sufficiently pure and holy to be admitted at once to the contemplation of the most pure and holy God. They are forced to tarry in the place of purification, until by suffering they shall have attained that perfection which they failed to acquire on earth, and which alone entitles them to the enjoyment of God. For them the "night has come in which no man can work"; being no longer in the state of meriting, they are not able in the least to help themselves. Their only recourse is resignation, patience and hope. By the voice of the Church they appeal to us, their brethren, that by our

prayers and good works, offered for them, we may shorten the time of their suffering, and hasten the moment of their admission to the rewards of heaven. Affection and piety should powerfully urge us to discharge towards them this religious duty. Those who suffer in purgatory are our fellow-men and fellow-Christians; and some of them are united to us by the tenderest bonds of nature. There we shall meet probably the greater number of those who have lived with us, who departed this life under our own eyes, or were consigned to the earth in our presence. For how few, we fear, go hence possessed of such great sanctity that, without further penance, they can be admitted to the joys of the heavenly kingdom? In Purgatory are probably many with whom we had frequent intercourse in life, many who, perhaps on our account, omitted many good deeds, or, through our fault, committed many sins, and who therefore, on our account, must atone and suffer for them. And perhaps they are our parents, our nearest relatives, our friends, to whom in life we were devotedly attached, and to whom we would have cheerfully rendered any service. Now, during their lives we could have rendered them no service, conferred upon them no favor, and shown them no mark of affection to be compared to the service we can render them now by our intercession for them after death. Neither are the souls suffering in purgatory ungrateful for our help; they will assuredly, by their own prayers, abundantly reward our kind acts, not only when they shall have entered the kingdom of God, and we in turn shall perhaps languish in the place of purification, but even now. For, having died in the grace and friendship of God, there is nothing to prevent their prayers for others, notwithstanding that they can do nothing for themselves. We are reminded of all this by the impressive solemnity of All Souls' day, which many hundred years ago was instituted for this purpose by the Church. And the circumstance that the memorial day of the souls departed immediately follows the

feast of All Saints, contributes in no small degree to render this day most salutary and beneficial for them ; for the more we had occasion on the preceding day in spirit to contemplate the joys and the happiness of the blessed in heaven, the deeper must be our grief that so many are still deprived of the enjoyment of this happiness, and we must feel ourselves greatly stimulated, by prayer and good works, and the holy sacrifice of Mass, and the reception of the Most Holy Sacrament, speedily to gain for them the happiness for which they so earnestly long. "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins" (2 Mach. xii. 46). This was the belief and practice even in the Old Testament.

Thomas—The prayers for the dead in the Catholic Church is another of those things on account of which I was much assailed by Protestants during my travels.

Pastor—For the tranquility of your mind let me inform you that, in the very earliest days of Christianity, it was customary to pray for the dead, just as we do to-day. The names of the dead were sent from one church and one monastery to another, and the prayers of the faithful were solicited for them during Mass, the names being read from the diptychs. And this is the origin of the "memorials," or printed cards or pious pictures, asking the prayers of the faithful for a person deceased, which in many localities, even to-day, are distributed at funeral services, or sent to those at a distance. St. Chrysostom tells us that during Mass the deacon turned to the people, crying in a loud voice : "Let us also pray for those who have died in Christ" ; and he says, moreover, that this was *ordained by the apostles*, because they knew well that these would derive great benefit from it.* Tertullian, who lived in the age next to that of the apostles, speaking of a pious widow, says : "She prays

* In cap. 1 Philip. Hom. 3.

for the soul of her husband, and begs refreshment for him.”* St. Augustine says “that there can be no doubt that through the prayers and sacrifices of the Church, and alms-deeds, God deals more mercifully with the departed than their sins deserve.”† And this saint not only fervently prayed for his holy mother Monica, in order, as he declares, “to obtain the pardon of her sins,” but he also beseeches God to inspire all those, for whom with voice or pen he labored, to remember his mother in their prayers.‡ It would take up too much time to quote upon this subject St. Cyprian, St. Cyril, Eusebius, St. Epiphanius, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Ephrem, and other ancient writers, to prove that the doctrine and practice of the Church regarding purgatory and prayers for the dead are the same to-day that they were in the first ages of the Church. Not only have the schismatic Greeks in the East, despite their separation from Rome, preserved the practice of praying for the dead, but even the Jews, though now without a temple and without an altar, faithfully cling to the pious custom of their fathers to offer up prayers for their deceased brethren. The doctrine of purgatory, and the practice of praying for the dead, is not only borne out by both the Old and New Testament, and the unanimous teachings of all holy writers of every age, but is grounded in the very nature of rational man. The heart necessarily desires to relieve the distress and want of those whom it loves, and it is cruelty to forbid it to gratify this desire. Now, is that love, which made us capable of every sacrifice for those dear to us, suddenly extinguished in our breasts as soon as they close their eyes in death? Is this temporary separation from those with whom one day we hope to be again united, to deaden and destroy the noblest sentiments and qualities of the soul? If we may pray for our

* “De Monogam.,” c. 10.

† “Confessions,” l.g.

‡ Serm. 172, *Enchirid.*

friends while they are with us, why should it be wrong to pray for them when absent? Let those that will, deny themselves the comfort and consolation which we derive from the doctrine of the usefulness of prayer for the dead, by which we still continue to be united with those who "sleep in the Lord." Let us hold fast to the teachings of the Church, and, following her admonition, earnestly and fervently pray for the souls of our brethren in Jesus Christ, languishing in that prison from which there is no deliverance till the last farthing shall have been paid. Let us not forget that "a hard heart shall fare ill at the last day."

Simon—Indeed, we pray for the dead not only on All Souls' day, but frequently throughout the year.

Pastor—You are right. Because the Church considers the prayers for the departed a religious duty, which has come down to her from the apostles, she gives to it so much importance. All Souls' Day, it is true, is devoted, in a particular manner, to the memory of the faithful departed, but we are not content to pray for them only once in the year. Following an ancient Christian custom, we do this every day. Even on the most solemn festivals the priest never omits, after the elevation at Mass, to recommend the souls of the departed to divine clemency.

Simon—The holy sacrifice of the Mass is likewise offered for the dead on other days during the year; for instance, on the day of their burial and the anniversary of their death.

Pastor—The Mass celebrated in behalf of the dead is called *Mass of Requiem*. Besides the Mass on the occasion of the obsequies, Requiem Masses are usually said in memory of the departed on the *third day*, with a view of reminding us of the resurrection of the Lord on the third day; then on the *seventh day*, because on the seventh day the Creator of heaven and earth rested from his work, and because the departed now also rests from the toil and labor of this life. For the true eternal rest—the happiness of heaven—we seek to

obtain for him by the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and the prayers of the faithful, if he be not yet worthy to be admitted to it. St. Ambrose says in this connection: "On the seventh day we again repair to the grave of the deceased; for this day is a figure of future rest." Again on the *thirtieth day* Mass is offered for the dead, in imitation of the mourning of the children of Israel, who lamented the death of Moses and Aaron for thirty days; this commemoration is commonly called "Month's Mind." Finally, the anniversary is observed and held sacred in memory of the departed. Most Catholics observe it by having a special Mass offered, and by giving alms. As the Church regards the day of death as the birthday to eternal life, we, as it were, congratulate our deceased friends, and wish them eternal peace and joy, on their anniversary day, just as we congratulate each other on the anniversary of some happy event in our lives.

Simon—Prayers and alms are no doubt the most acceptable congratulations we can offer to our departed brethren languishing in purgatory.

Pastor—Be not wanting, therefore, in devotion to the departed, either on their anniversary or at other times; animate yourselves to prayer and works of charity for them, bearing in mind that you, too, will eagerly long for deliverance from suffering, through the prayers of the living, if the sentence of the judge shall condemn you to the fire of purification.

Thomas—These Masses of Requiem are only said for individuals whose relatives are able to bear the expense, while the poor, or those without friends, are deprived of this powerful means of succor.

Pastor—The fruits of the Mass are twofold—namely, general and particular. By fruits of the Mass are meant all the spiritual advantages, graces and blessings, even temporal gifts and favors, which God confers upon us in view of the merits of his Divine Son, offered to him in the sacrifice

of the Mass. The general fruits of the Mass are applied to the whole Church, and all her members, both living and dead, participate in them. The priest offers the Mass in the name and by the commission of the Church, and therefore according to her intention ; now, in the prayers of the Mass, it is clearly expressed that it is the intention of the Church to offer the Holy Sacrifice for the whole Church—for “those present, and for *all* the faithful, living and dead, that it may redound to the salvation of all.” After the consecration the priest makes another special memento or remembrance of the dead, praying for *all* those that are “gone before us with the sign of faith, and repose in the sleep of peace.” St. Chrysostom says that at the altar the priest is, as it were, “a common father of the whole world.” Besides these *general* fruits of the Mass, there are also others that are not applied to all, but only to particular persons, and hence they are called *particular fruits*. These are applied *first* to the priest, who offers the Mass. For, according to the words of St. Paul (Heb. v. 3), the priest “ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifice”; and he actually does this, for when offering the Host he prays: “Accept, O holy Father! this clean sacrifice which I offer to thee for my innumerable sins, offences, and negligences.” *Secondly*, all those present at the Mass also receive a special fruit, for they, in a manner, take part with the priest in the offering; and he prays, as I have already said, particularly for those present. *Thirdly*, those share in the particular fruits of Mass for whom it is especially offered—that is to say, to whom the priest, as the representative of Christ, desires particularly to apply them. There can be no doubt that this is within the power of the priest, for if he can pray for all the faithful in general, he can certainly also pray for individuals in particular. It has always been the practice in the Church to have the Holy Sacrifice offered in particular necessities and for particular intentions. Nay, the Church has even made it obligatory upon

her pastors, on every Sunday and holyday of obligation, to offer Mass especially for the people entrusted to their care. From this you will see, Thomas, that Mass is never offered in such a manner as to exclude any of the faithful from its blessings or benefits. As regards the expenses of funerals and anniversaries, I am sure you will find it but reasonable and just that those having the means and desiring special display at the funerals or anniversaries of their relatives, such as music or draping of the church, should also bear the outlays occasioned by this extra pomp.

Simon—Will you have the kindness to tell us also something about the ceremonies at burials or funerals?

Pastor—Thus far we have spoken of the solicitude of the Church for the souls of the departed. In her burial service we may also learn the pious care she bestows upon the bodies of her deceased children.

Thomas—The thought of what shall become of my body, when once I shall be dead, gives me very little concern.

Pastor—Thomas, you would sink very much in my esteem, if I thought that the words which you have just uttered were really your sentiments. The Catholic Church, and all who in reality belong to her, think quite differently of the dignity of the bodies of the departed faithful. The body, in the first place, is the medium or instrument of so many beautiful virtues, and of so many works of piety performed by the Christian during his life, and should, for that reason alone, receive our respect and reverence. Secondly, all the sacraments we receive, we receive by means of the body. The body is washed in baptism, in order to cleanse the soul. The body is anointed, that it may become a temple of the Holy Ghost. The body is fed with the sacred flesh and nourished with the precious blood of Christ, to strengthen and fortify the soul. Thirdly, the Christian body is an object of veneration for us, because we hope, and faith gives us the assurance, that on the last day it will rise again from

the dust and mould of the grave, and will be clothed with splendor and glory, to share with the soul the eternal joys it merited. Hence the Christian manner of burial was soon distinguished from that of the pagans. While the Christians dressed their bodies plainly but neatly, the pagans clothed them in splendid and costly robes. This vain display and useless waste was often commented upon and censured by the Fathers. St. Jerome says: "How does this pride and vainglory suit affliction, and tears, and sorrow? Cannot the bodies of the rich rot without being wrapped in costly silks?"

Simon—Similar questions might be asked even to-day.

Pastor—The most beautiful ornament of the Christian body is the symbol which indicates his faith in the Redeemer, and his hope of resurrection and eternal life. Hence we do not, like the pagans, burn the bodies of our dead, but place them in wooden coffins, and confide them to the earth. The cross which ornaments the coffin, the cross placed in the hands of the departed brother, the cross that is borne before the funeral cortége, the cross, finally, that after the burial is planted upon the grave, signifies that the deceased has died a good Christian, and looks for a glorious resurrection of his body, and eternal happiness only through the merits of Christ crucified. The lights and torches used at burials have their origin in the fact that in former times burials took place at night. In the days of persecution the Christians could not bury the remains of the martyrs and other dead otherwise than at night, and, as it were, by stealth. After the days of persecution the Christians began to have their funerals in the daytime, but the use of lights and torches was retained on account of the memory attached to them, and because of their symbolical signification. For they remind us that the deceased walked in the light of faith, and that the flame of divine love burned in his heart. But what particularly distinguished Christian from

heathen burials was the manner of conducting funerals. The pagans employed certain men and women, whose business it was to bewail and lament the deceased on behalf of his friends; these official mourners would scratch their faces, tear their hair, and even with knives would lacerate their arms; certain women would also sing doleful and lugubrious songs. Even the Jews copied this custom from the pagans. Instead of all these vanities, that are of no avail for the deceased, the Christians introduced the singing of psalms and hymns.

Thomas—Well, the ceremonies of the pagans might also be regarded as signs of grief and sorrow.

Pastor—One thing is certain, their grief was not Christian, and therefore the Fathers of the early Church condemned the Christians, if, after the manner of the pagans, they carried the manifestations of their sorrow too far. St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians (iv. 12), says: "And we will not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that you be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope." The sense of these words is: The heathens believe neither in the resurrection of the body, nor in a future life; hence they deplore the death of their friends as an irrevocable misfortune; but you Christians should try to look upon the death of your brethren as a happy event, as their entry into a better life. Therefore you must rather rejoice at their death, and wish them joy, and, instead of mournful songs, sing hymns of praise and thanksgiving, because the mercy of God has freed your brethren from the prison of this mortal body, and has transferred them to the freedom of the children of God. St. Cyprian says (*Tract de Mort.*): "No, we should not bewail our deceased fellow-Christians, for they are not truly dead, but really live with God; they are not lost to us, for we have only sent them before us as our former associates in the pilgrimage of this life, and we shall soon follow them; therefore we ought only to long after them, but not deplore them."

Simon—But can grief and sorrow at the death of our relations be anything wrong? Why, it is not even in our power to repress these feelings.

Pastor—Grief or mourning is by no means wrong, and no one asks of us to look with indifference upon the bodies of our departed friends. It is not the object of Christianity to make us hard-hearted or cruel; on the contrary, the various ceremonies of the funeral service tend to fill us with a calm and quiet sadness, and one full of resignation; the tears we shed for our friends are but so many proofs of the love we bear them, and true affection is not only not forbidden, but even commanded by Christianity. But it is only that grief or sorrow which borders on despair that the Church would condemn; and if there dwells in our breast a living faith that death is followed by a glorious resurrection and by another and a better life; and if we really cherish the hope that God will receive the departed into his kingdom, and that he will not exclude those left behind from his fatherly care, then we will surely remain strangers to that grief which is unworthy of a Christian. Moreover, the prayers of the Church, in her service for the dead, are eminently calculated to awaken this hope and confidence in us. On entering the house of mourning, to take the body to the church, the priest begins with the words: "If thou shalt observe iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand it?" and then says the 129th Psalm, "De profundis," in which these comforting words occur: "With thee there is merciful forgiveness, and by reason of thy law I have waited for thee, O Lord. My soul hath relied on his word; my soul hath hoped in the Lord. From the morning watch even until night let Israel hope in the Lord, because with the Lord there is mercy, and with him plentiful redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." Then follows the prayer: "Eternal rest give to him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him." On the way to the church the 50th Psalm, "Miserere," is chanted

or recited, in which we humbly implore God's mercy for ourselves and the deceased, terminating with the following prayer: "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for no man shall be justified in thy sight, except thou vouchsafe to grant him the remission of all his sins. Let not, therefore, we beseech thee, the sentence of thy judgment fall upon him, whom the true supplication of Christian faith commendeth to thee; but by the assistance of thy grace let him escape the judgment of thy vengeance, who, while he was living, was sealed with the sign of the Holy Trinity, who livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen."

Simon—What is the meaning of sprinkling the body with holy water, and incensing it with incense, and throwing three shovelfuls of earth upon the coffin?

Pastor—The sprinkling and incensing figuratively expresses the wish that God would pour out upon the soul of the deceased the grace of his redemption and his boundless mercy, and grant to it the enjoyment of eternal glory. When thrice casting some earth upon the body the priest says: "Of earth thou hast formed me, with flesh thou hast clothed me; raise me, gracious Redeemer, at the last day." From these words you can readily understand the meaning or sense of this ceremony. Those attending the burial are thus to be reminded of their beginning and their end; for man is formed of the dust of the earth, and must again return to the dust of the earth, but the last day calls us to a new life.

Simon—The priest frequently sprinkles and incenses, in the absence of a coffin, a frame, covered with a pall, which is erected in the church.

Pastor—This frame, called, in the language of the Church, *tumba*, or catafalque, is merely to represent the coffin and the body, and the prayers which are said near it are to apply to the soul of the deceased. In former times all bodies were laid out in the church for one, two, and sometimes three days before their interment; it was customary in their pre-

sence to recite the office of the dead, and, since the faithful passed the whole night near the corpse, praying and singing, this office is still called "vigil," signifying "watch." During these days Masses of Requiem were also said in presence of the corpse. When subsequently many considerations rendered it desirable to omit this exposition of the body, the use of the catafalque was introduced instead. As regards the interment of the body, you may not have observed that, whenever possible, we lay the body in a certain direction.

Simon—How is that?

Pastor—In Catholic cemeteries the bodies are put into the ground in such a manner that they look towards the east. This is to signify that the deceased place their hope and trust in Christ, who is the light of our soul, just as the sun, rising in the east, is the light of the physical world; and the rising sun is also taken as a symbol of the resurrection.

Simon—You have already remarked that the churches are usually built with the altar to the east, and assigned for it a similar reason.

Pastor—Quite right; and to the circumstance that our churches are built in this direction, there is due another custom—namely, that, in cases of interment within the church, the face of the deceased is turned towards the altar, consequently also towards the east. The bodies of the clergy are laid in such a manner that they face the congregation, having during life turned to the people from the altar.

Simon—Interments within the enclosure of the church are, no doubt, very rare at present.

Pastor—The ancient Roman law forbade the interment of the dead within the walls of the city; hence the Romans buried their dead along the highways outside the city. The wealthy ordinarily set apart some field or garden near the high-road, and in the middle of this plot they erected a monument, often a spacious chamber, provided with an al-

tar in which their remains or their ashes were placed. In this chamber the members of the family would assemble on the anniversary of the death, and on other occasions, to partake of a feast in memory of their dead. The noble and wealthy among the Christians, prompted by that love for their brethren which called forth the admiration and even the reproach of the heathen, set apart for their poorer brethren certain fields or *areæ* for burial purposes, or the latter may have acquired others by forming among themselves guilds or clubs, the members of which paid monthly dues to provide for the expenses of their burial. The Christians excavated these fields, forming underneath the surface, for miles around the walls of Rome, a vast, silent city of the dead. These underground burial-places were called *cæmeteria* (signifying a "sleeping-place"), and also *cryptæ*, and *aræ*; they have been, since the sixteenth century, generally known as *Catacombs*, though this name occurs as early as the fourth century. To designate them (they number about forty), they were called after the name of the Christian owner, or after some distinguished martyr that was there buried. They form a vast, but disconnected network of underground streets or tunnels cut in the soft tufa rock, crossing each other at right angles. These excavations are generally made on two or three levels, and sometimes on even as many as five, thus forming five underground *stories* reached by staircases. Into the walls of the passages or streets, called galleries, horizontal niches, termed *loculi*, were cut, ranged in tiers above each other, from the floor to the ceiling, sometimes to the number of *fourteen*. In these niches the departed Christians were laid, and the opening of the niche was closed with tiles or slabs bearing the name of the occupant. The greatest economy was exercised to save space, but every one had his own "new sepulchre hewn out of the rock, wherein no man had yet been laid." The galleries are from seven to fifteen feet high,

and so narrow that two persons can with difficulty walk side by side ; but if they were stretched out in one continuous line, they would perhaps measure nearly a thousand miles, and the number of sepulchres or graves has been estimated at *six millions*. Besides these narrow galleries there were also small chambers, perhaps twelve or fourteen feet square ; these were set apart as family vaults. In many of these chambers, or *cubicula*, arched or vault-shaped niches were formed, and at the base of the niche, under the arch, horizontal tombs or sarcophagi were hewn out of the stone ; these served generally for the burial of distinguished martyrs, and were called *arcosolia*, an arched throne or coffin. The work of these gigantic excavations was entrusted to a guild of true disciples of Tobias, known as *fossores*, or “diggers,” who received from the Church a special blessing, or I might say a kind of ordination, for their laborious and self-sacrificing vocation of burying the dead. I have repeatedly referred to the fact that, during the times of the persecutions, the Catacombs were used by the Christians as places of temporary refuge from their enemies, and that, when the public exercise of their religion was forbidden, they assembled here for purposes of worship. To afford the necessary accommodation for this purpose, much larger and more numerous chambers, of various forms, were excavated, provided also with *luminaria*, or shafts communicating with the surface of the upper ground, by which light and air could be supplied to those who were assembled below. Some of these chapels so much resemble the subsequent basilicas, that some archæologists maintain that the latter were built after the model of the chapels in the Catacombs. The slab covering the sarcophagus of an *arcosolium* constituted the altar, upon which the holy mysteries were celebrated. On the side was the seat of the bishop, and along the wall the benches, cut from the rock, for the accommodation of the clergy. It was in these crypts that a long line of pontiffs frequently dwelt for extended

periods; Pope Cajus, the own nephew of the cruel Diocletian, is said to have passed eight years in the Catacombs. It was here that they instructed and baptized the catechumens, ordained the priests, and inaugurated ecclesiastical discipline. From here they governed the whole fold of Christ, issued their pastorals, and discharged the duties of their high office. It was here that the Christians strengthened themselves with the Bread of the Strong for the bloody conflict, and hence they courageously went forth to the arena of martyrdom; and when the palm of victory was won, the bodies of these Christian heroes were brought back like trophies to the Catacombs, there to be buried with all the honors due to the valiant warrior of Christ. But the blood which these martyrs shed in defence of their faith was but the seed of new and ever-increasing hosts of Christian warriors, till at length the banner of the cross, planted by the hand of Constantine, floated victoriously from the battlements of Rome, and this ancient bulwark of paganism became the heart of a new world, from whose pulsations the streams of faith and charity coursed throughout the veins of mankind. —When unrestricted freedom of worship was granted to the Christians, the remains of martyrs were taken from the Catacombs, and deposited in the Christian churches or basilicas erected above ground. The Christians of those days were desirous of being buried near the tombs of the martyrs; they deemed it an honor to have their own remains laid near the relics of those heroes of the faith, who, on account of their shining virtues, were so dear to them in life; and they hoped, moreover, by this loving union to be assisted by their prayers, and to rise in their glorious company on the last day. This veneration of the martyrs gradually led to the custom of making the interments under, or at least very near, the churches. Regard for the health of the living subsequently necessitated the restriction of this privilege to the bishops and the clergy, for the multitude of burials in churches, particularly if the

graves were shallow, or the vaults ill closed, sensibly infected the air with noxious gases. The faithful were not, however, on this account deprived of the consolation of resting near the martyrs, because the burials were then made immediately around the churches, whence, too, they received the name of *church-yards*, and were looked upon as the court or vestibule of the temple.

Thomas—This was also the reason why, in more recent times, the burial-places have been removed from the vicinity of the churches and placed outside of the cities—a precaution which can only be commended.

Pastor—The pastors of the Church have never been unmindful of the temporal welfare of the faithful, and have always taken care to keep the number of interments near churches within the bounds of safety. Whenever this thoughtful care for the health of the people was the motive for closing or removing the cemeteries, it was certainly most laudable; but not unfrequently this solicitude was made a pretext by others to attain another, and not so laudable an object: many were unwilling to be reminded of death by the proximity of the graves—a remembrance which, despite its great utility for a truly pious life, is most unwelcome to many persons. If our path to church leads us past the tombs of our ancestors, every visit to the holy temple will recall to our minds their virtues, and admonish us by faithful imitation, to show ourselves their worthy descendants. The sight of the graves of our friends, on our walk to the church on Sunday, must place us in an earnest and solemn frame of mind, and is particularly calculated to dispose and prepare us to perform our devotions in the house of prayer with becoming interior recollection and earnestness. We shall also feel the more urgently called upon, and the more effectually moved to pray for our dead, if, in order to reach the church, we must pass by their graves; for what heart can remain untouched by the cry of distress that comes

up from the hallowed mounds: "Have pity on us, have pity, at least you our friends?" Finally, in placing side by side our cradle and our tomb, the Church would also remind us of our own death; and this remembrance cannot be awakened to often in us, in order to deter us from sin, to encourage and stimulate us to virtue, and fill us with contempt for the fleeting goods of this world. Hence the prayers which, according to the direction of the Church, we say for the dead, contain likewise for us, who live, an admonition of death, and of the judgment immediately following. To illustrate this, I need only call your attention to the deeply touching "*Dies Iræ*," sung during the Requiem Mass.

Several among the audience begged the pastor to give them also a translation of this hymn. He readily complied with this request, for he happened to know the translation by heart.

DIES IRÆ.

The day of wrath, ah! me, the day,
That shall the world in ashes lay,
As David and the Sibyl say.

What trembling there will be, and fear,
When men shall see their judge appear,
With strictest condemnation near!

Erewhile the trumpet's startling tone,
Through deep, sepulchral regions blown,
Compels the dead before the throne.

Nature and Death will stand aghast,
When Earth's great dead come thronging fast,
Responsive to the awful blast.

Now in their presence, lo! is brought
The book with every work and thought
The living and the dead have wrought.

So when the Judge each soul shall cite,
Its covert sin will come to light,
Its wrong must recompense the right.

Ah! wretched me, what shall I say?
Whose potent intercession pray,
When e'en the just are in dismay?

King of tremendous majesty,
Whoso is saved, by grace must be.
Save me, Fount of Piety!

Remember, Jesus dear, I pray,
Though the cause of thy weary way,
Spare my poor soul on that dread day.

Worn and weary in seeking me,
Redeeming on the cursed tree,
Lord, be not in vain thine agony!

Thou spotless Judge of righteousness,
Grant my guilty soul release,
Before that day of stern redress.

As if condemned, I groan and sigh,
Shame burns my cheek, grief fills my eye;
God, hear my supplicating cry.

Thou who didst Mary's guilt forbear,
And heardst the thief's expiring prayer,
Hast saved me from complete despair.

I for my prayers no merit claim;
Only thou, Lord, for thy great name,
Save my poor soul from endless flame.

Among the chosen give me place—
Remove me from the wicked race
To thy right hand, in endless peace.

When the accursed are put to shame—
Banished to fierce, devouring flame—
Then with thy blessed call my name.

Prostrate, I pray in humble trust,
With contrite heart, low in the dust,
At death receive me, O Most Just!

Ah ! that will be a tearful day—
When heaven and earth shall pass away—
To man, the culprit at thy bar ;
Him, therefore, God, in mercy spare.

Simon—This hymn is truly calculated to make us think of our last end, and of the fearful judgment to come.

Several others coincided with Simon, and expressed the opinion that whoever remained cold and unmoved by it must be exceedingly hard-hearted.

Thomas was of the same opinion, but had some exception to take to a remark made by the pastor a little while before. He could not understand, he said, how, in the early days of Christianity, so much importance could have been given to the separation of pagans and Christians, and why the latter should have been buried in a separate burial-place. But if this could even be passed over, it was certainly very intolerant and reprehensible to separate *Christians* from each other, and not to allow Catholics and Protestants to be buried within the same enclosure. He went still further, and advanced the view that without doubt Catholic dust and Protestant dust could agree peaceably together.*

The *Pastor* did not seem to pay particular attention to the latter effusion, in which Thomas rather excitedly gave forth the superficial phrases he had learned, but quietly asked :

Thomas, do you find it strange or unreasonable if a family has its own family plot or vault, and that all the members of a family, who during life were bound together by the bonds of affection, should desire to lie near each other also in death ?

Thomas—No objection can be made to that, but surely that does not apply here.

* Where persons have family vaults or plots in a Catholic cemetery, the interment of the non-Catholic members of their family in them is tolerated.—*Ex Decr. S. Cong. Inquisit.*, 30 Martii, 1859.

Pastor—Who can tell? Would you find fault with these people if they should refuse permission to bury a stranger in their family-plot?

Thomas—Far from it; why, if that were done, it would no longer be a family ground.

Pastor—Now listen. In a family there are often persons who are only allied by the bonds of relationship, but in life pursue entirely different objects, even oppose each other in their plans, and in sentiment and in manner of thinking are actually antagonistic; and yet no reasonable objection can be made to their wish in death to rest together, without intrusion from strangers. Now, all Catholics form one great family, whose members are allied to each other, not merely by the ties of blood, but likewise by higher spiritual bonds. Throughout life they hold the same faith, the same hope animates them, and the same charity for God unites them in the fulfilment of his commandments. All receive the same divine grace by means of the same sacraments, and all strive after the same kingdom. Now, why should you find fault with them for wishing to have their earthly remains rest near each other, after having been united by such intimate spiritual bonds? This was the reason why they separated themselves from the pagans, and formed for themselves common, Christian family grounds—for every Christian burying-ground is in reality a family ground or plot. And it is quite natural that the Catholics should strive to perpetuate, even in death, the harmony that united them in life, and should object if those who did not belong to their spiritual family were to crowd themselves into their ranks in death. We Catholics believe that we may and ought to pray for the departed. Protestants do not share with us this belief. How it must jar upon our feelings, and disturb our devotion if, standing at the tomb of our own, we would send up to God an earnest and fervent prayer for them, and behold, at the same time, the graves of those who throughout

their lives assailed this belief ! We love to adorn our graves with the symbol of redemption ; our separated brethren, strangely enough, sometimes take offence at this sign, and, it may be, recall to our minds those to whom, ages ago, the cross was a folly or a scandal. We honor the remains of our departed brethren as the former instruments of virtuous lives, as venerable relics, as the sharers, one day, of eternal glory ; while those not of our household know nothing of a religious veneration of relics. All these are reasons why we are unwilling to share our last resting-place with those who do not profess the same faith with us.

Thomas—But what if some one would voluntarily waive the right to be buried in this great, exclusive Catholic family-ground ?

Pastor—In that case no one, least of all the Catholic Church, would compel him to make use of his right. Under certain circumstances the Church would rather look upon this as an evidence that the departed had ceased, even in life, to belong to this Catholic family, and that, consequently, he had not even the *right* to burial among Catholic Christians, and after the Catholic manner. The right of Christian burial is forfeited by all who, on account of their criminal or scandalous lives, have been excommunicated or excluded from the communion of the Church, and have died without being reconciled with her ; likewise by those who refuse to receive the last sacraments, or who take their own lives. He that has outraged or disgraced the Church, and contemned her warnings and admonitions, and has thus shown himself unworthy to appear in her temple, is also properly excluded from the court or vestibule of the temple—the church-yard—just as a degenerate son is expelled and sent forth from his father's house.

Thomas—The denial of Christian burial to members of secret societies, such as Freemasons, Odd-Fellows, and others, is another reason why the charge of harshness and intolerance is brought against the Catholic Church.

Pastor—A charge as unfounded and unreasonable as all the other charges brought against her. In doing this the Church does nothing more than exercise a right which every society or organization claims for itself. Every society imposes upon its members the performance of certain duties, as a condition to entitle them to the benefits or advantages of the association. Thus, for instance, the members of mutual benevolent societies are required to pay certain monthly contributions or dues, in consideration of which they are entitled, in case of sickness, to draw a fixed amount from the treasury of the society. To ensure the regular payment of these dues, the society imposes certain fines or penalties for the omission ; for instance, if a member fails for a certain length of time to pay his dues, he forfeits his right to assistance in case of sickness ; and if, after a further period, he still neglects to comply with his obligations, he is expelled from the society, or, which is the same, he is *excommunicated*. Now, the Catholic Church is also a society, whose object it is to afford its members not temporal, but spiritual aid and assistance. As such, she must also have the right to employ such means as will ensure the obedience of those belonging to her. To her has been given the commission to lead her members to heaven, and, therefore, it is their duty to be guided by her direction. Experience has taught her that certain societies, either directly or indirectly, are hurtful or dangerous to her children, and, therefore, it is her duty not only to warn, but absolutely to forbid them to affiliate themselves with such societies. To lend force and sanction to her prohibition, she has recourse to those spiritual means which alone are at her command—namely, she deprives those of her children who refuse her obedience, of the spiritual help and aid of her sacraments during life ; that is to say, she *excommunicates* them, and, if they continue in their obduracy even in death, she denies them a resting-place among her departed members. Moreover, to insist upon burying non-

Catholics, or those excluded from the communion of the Church, in an exclusively Catholic burying-ground, would be doing violence to the will of the deceased ; for it would be forcing them, against their will, into the ranks of those to whom in life, when they could decide for themselves, they did not wish to belong.

Simon—If I have understood your remarks about excommunication aright, it is only a punishment for correction, and not for sake of the punishment itself.

Pastor—You have, indeed, understood me correctly. Excommunication is a penalty imposed not for vindictive, but only for corrective purposes—namely, to enforce obedience—and it ceases as soon as the disobedient member makes his submission.

Simon—Where burial-places are removed from the vicinity of the church, they can no longer be called church-yards.

Pastor—Not if you take the word in its proper and literal sense ; but however far the cemetery be removed from the church, we regard it as a sacred and venerable spot, still belonging to the church, and for that reason it is solemnly blessed, just like the church itself, and therefore it may still bear the name of *church-yard*.

Simon—Would you be kind enough to tell us how cemeteries are blessed or consecrated ?

Pastor—I will do so briefly. On the day before a cemetery is blessed or consecrated, five crosses are erected in it, a large one in the centre and a smaller one in each corner. In front of each of these five crosses a wooden stand or candle-holder is placed, capable of holding three candles. These lifeless wooden stands, resembling the dryness of fleshless bones, represent man in his grave. They were set up yesterday, for yesterday is a figure of fleeting time ; and in every corner of the cemetery, to remind us that the empire of death is spread all over the earth. The three candles, not yet lighted, represents the imperishable germ of life placed in our bodies

by the three persons of the Blessed Trinity. Soon, at the direction of the bishop (the function of consecrating a cemetery is usually performed by the bishop), these candles will be lighted, and I will give you the mysterious signification of the light. The cross in the centre of the field is higher than the others, and represents our Lord Jesus Christ, who, having vanquished death, has become for us the resurrection and the life. He is the first-born among the dead, casting his protecting and saving shadow over his sleeping brethren. From their places in the four extremities of the field the four smaller crosses proclaim that the life-giving blood of Calvary has flowed to the four quarters of the globe, to bring life on the day of resurrection to all men, no matter in what age or clime they may have died.* It is therefore a beautiful custom, not to be omitted, to adorn the grave of every one dying in the Catholic faith with the consoling sign of the redemption. Even the most costly and elaborate monument, if lacking this sign, can in no wise be compared with the ornament which a simple wooden cross affords to the resting-place of the Christian.

Thomas—But are only crosses to be erected upon the graves of our friends?

Pastor—I did not say that. Monuments of all kinds and forms, elaborate and plain, may be erected upon them. But of whatever character they may be, the symbol of redemption, or at least some other Christian sign, must not be wanting on them. The friends of the deceased honor the memory of their departed in a sorry manner, if they decorate his grave in such a way that it cannot be distinguished from the grave of some deceased pagan.—Now let us return to the ceremony of the blessing. The candles are lively representations of the general resurrection. When a fire is extinguished, we say it is lifeless, but alive when

* See Gaume, "Christian Cemetery."

rekindled. Extinguished, these candles remind us of a dead man ; but when burning we see in spirit the man restored to life. This is the mysterious meaning of the lights. The bishop, together with the clergy and the people, recites the Litany of the Saints. Towards the last verse or invocation the bishop makes the sign of the cross three times ; he begs that God would vouchsafe to purify, bless, sanctify, and consecrate this cemetery, and grant that the bodies of all those here buried may, on the great day of judgment, arise glorious from the tomb, be reunited to their souls, and be admitted to the joys of heaven. At the conclusion of this prayer the bishop walks around the four sides of the ground, sprinkling it with holy water. Returning to the central cross, he prays that when the angel's trumpet shall sound, all the bodies here interred may arise to share eternal glory with the saints, and, in union with them, for ever sing the eternal praises of their merciful Father, who is the author of their happy and glorious life. He then incenses the principal cross, the figure of Jesus Christ, and, taking the three lighted tapers from the wooden stands, sets them on the top of the cross. He repeats this last ceremony at each of the four smaller crosses. Thus is proclaimed and professed the belief in a general resurrection of all men to eternal life, effected by virtue and power of the cross of Calvary.

Thomas.—What difference does it make where the body is buried ? It seems to me that for the soul it must be a matter of indifference whether the body is confided to the earth or cast into the sea.

Pastor.—To the Catholic Christian it makes a very great difference. I have already told you that the prayers of the Church are attached to the objects or places which she blesses or consecrates, and her prayers in the blessing of cemeteries form no exception. In blessing the cemetery she implores God mercifully to grant to the souls of those whose bodies shall here be buried, the possession of the heavenly Je-

rusalem, until, at the great day of resurrection, they shall again be united to their bodies, in order thus, in union with them, to go joyfully to meet the Lord, coming to judgment, with the fruit of their good deeds. This, then, is a perpetual prayer offered by the Church for the happiness of those resting in blessed ground, and one, moreover, highly prized by all who still believe that her prayers are of avail to us.

Simon—To me it affords the greatest consolation and happiness to know, that my body shall rest from the struggles and hardships of this life in ground hallowed by the powerful prayers of the Church.

Pastor—It is precisely this consoling thought which makes burial in consecrated ground so precious in the eyes of the Catholic ; and on this account, besides for other reasons, we look upon the cemetery as upon something venerable and sacred.—You remarked a minute ago that we could not properly call a cemetery separated from the church a church-yard ; do you know what other truly beautiful and significant name we have besides to designate a cemetery ?

Simon—I cannot just now remember any other.

Pastor—Besides cemetery, signifying a dormitory, Catholic language has another name to designate the burial-place of the Christians, and one that also implies resurrection—namely, “Field of God,” or “God’s Acre.” Like large furrows the rows of graves lie side by side, and the bodies buried in them are so many grains of seed, which shall sprout forth on the great day of resurrection. Good and bad, wheat and cockle, lie in these furrows side by side, and, at the sound of the angel’s trumpet, shall appear above the surface, either to be garnered into the granary of the Lord, or to be cast into everlasting fire. Thus the cemetery is truly an acre of God, in which the bodies of the faithful are sowed like seed, to rise one day to eternal life. Most distressing is the thought that from God’s acre there shall one day also rise up the

bodies of the damned and reprobate ! My friends, let us have care that none of us shall be of their number. But, on the other hand, it is also cheering and consoling to think of how many just here rest from the hardships of life, from the sufferings and persecutions they endured on this earth, to rise one day to the reward of eternal glory. Most cheering is the thought that the souls of many of the bodies resting in this field even now are in the enjoyment of eternal bliss. Many, no doubt, have yet to suffer and atone for the imperfections which they carried with them into the other world ; but be the time of their purification long or short, they still belong to the number of the elect, and shall be placed at the right hand of the Judge on the great day of judgment. How great, therefore, must be our respect for a spot containing the relics of so many blessed inhabitants of heaven ! Every skull or bone that we find in this sacred place may belong to a body whose soul is now before the throne of the Most High, in the company of the angels and the saints.

Simon—Truly, this is a grand and elevating thought.

Pastor—Endeavor often to awaken this thought in your hearts, and earnestly strive to lead such lives that your remains may one day rest in our cemetery, as relics of a holy body that, at the sound of the trumpet, shall be united with a holy spirit. Cherish also reverence and affection for the sacred spot in which your pious ancestors and fellow-Christians sleep in peace. The manner in which you treat this holy spot will mark for every stranger that passes by the grade of Christian civilization and culture you have attained.

With these remarks the Pastor closed the conference of the evening, as well as the series of explanations he had given of the ecclesiastical year and other matters that were incidentally suggested. Great sorrow and regret was manifested by the meeting when he announced that this evening would

terminate their conferences, and he could only satisfy the audience by making the promise, at some future time, to give them equally useful instructions on the ceremonies prescribed by the Church for the administration of the sacraments. He suggested to them, in the meanwhile, frequently to recall to mind the subjects which they had discussed together, and not to content themselves with the mere entertainment they had enjoyed, but to endeavor to retain in their memories the explanations given, and to draw from them abundant fruits for their future lives. Blessing them, and recommending them to the protection of the Almighty, he bid them good-night.

Part Second.

rites and ceremonies used in the administration of the sacraments.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

THE Pastor permitted considerable time to elapse before he resumed his conferences ; not that they had become irksome to him, or that he deemed the time which he had, in this manner, given to his people too great a sacrifice. Neither had the interest, always shown by his numerous audience, in any way diminished ; on the contrary, it had rather increased, for he was repeatedly requested again to come to the meetings of the parish, and begin the instructions he promised to give them on the Rites and Ceremonies used in the Administration of the Sacraments. Still, he deemed it advisable to defer, for some time, the fulfilment of his promise. On the one hand, he knew very well that the time of intermission would not be lost, but that his good people would, at their usual evening gatherings, the more frequently discuss what he had already communicated to them, and thus fix it the more firmly in their minds ; and, on the other hand, he deemed it best, notwithstanding the deep interest

they had heretofore manifested, to give them some time for rest, so that, when he should resume his instructions, they might attend the more eagerly, and bestow upon the conferences greater attention.

At length one day he communicated to Simon his intention of resuming the conferences on the following Sunday, and requested him to instruct those who desired to take part in them to assemble in the hall of the school. A few hours sufficed to spread this good news over the entire village. Although the Pastor had taken care on the appointed day to arrive early, in order to make the necessary arrangements to seat the people, etc., he found the greater part of his auditors already assembled, and the remainder soon made their appearance. The Pastor thus addressed them:

It was not by mere chance that I administered the Sacrament of Baptism to a child this afternoon at the hour when the congregation was already assembled for divine service. All of you have, at some time, been present when this sacrament was conferred, but perhaps many among you would not have been able to recall to mind the various ceremonies which are employed in its administration as well as you can now. I shall now, with God's help, explain to you the different rites as they follow in order. But to convince myself whether you have retained the ceremonies in the order in which they succeed each other, I shall let you recite them successively yourselves.

Simon—Here I would like, first of all, to enquire why the child is not at once brought to the baptismal font, but is first prayed over by the priest at the door of the church ?

Pastor—I have already told you that in the beginning of Christianity, when the baptized were mostly adult converts, Jews and pagans, these were not at once baptized, but were held for a time as catechumens, under instruction and preparation, and were compelled, whilst catechumens, to stand near the door of the church, and after the customary instruc-

tion, they were dismissed by the deacon just before the **Offer-**tory of the Mass. In memory of this ancient custom, the child to be baptized is not at once admitted to the church, but must remain at its portals. This is to indicate that the right has not yet been conferred upon it to appear in the house of God, to take part in the prayers and worship of the faithful, or to be counted among the disciples and followers of Jesus Christ. Baptism is the door by which the child is admitted into the communion of the faithful, and entitled to receive the other sacraments. This ceremony is also to signify that without baptism no one can enter into the kingdom of God, nor be admitted to the number of the saints of heaven, in accordance with the words of Christ : “ Except a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God ” (John iii. 5). In the beginning, baptism was not administered in the church itself, but in *baptisteries*. These were spacious outer buildings, or separate chapels within the enclosure of the church ; after having made their profession of faith, the catechumens were led forth to the baptistery, and there baptized.

Simon—Why does the child receive a particular name in baptism ?

Pastor—The name given in baptism is to remind the person baptized that he has been changed into a new and better man, and enrolled among the number of Christians. The name given in baptism should always be that of some saint, and no profane or heathen name, in order that the name, which the Christian bears, may incite him to imitate the virtues of the saint after whom he is called, and to admonish him not to disgrace the name that has been given him. What a shame for a Christian to whom, for instance, the name of John or Paul is given, if instead of bearing in his heart the love of St. John, or the living faith and zeal of St. Paul, he only distinguishes himself by his indifference to God, and his cowardice in professing his religion. What a disgrace for a

Christian woman who, bearing the name of St. Ann, or that of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is not solicitous to practise the virginal purity of the latter, or, if a mother, does not, after the example of the former, strive to bring up her children for God.—Besides this, the person baptized is placed under the special protection of the saint whose name he receives, and is reminded often to implore his intercession with God. On this account we call this saint our *patron*, which signifies *protector*.

Simon—Why does the priest thrice breathe upon the child, and repeatedly make over it the sign of the cross?

Pastor—The Creator breathed upon Adam to impart to him a soul and life, and the Saviour breathed upon his disciples to impart to them the Holy Ghost. Now, in baptism the spiritual life of the soul and the grace of the Holy Ghost is imparted to man, and of this we are to be reminded by the threefold breathing upon the child. The repeated signs of the cross express that the Sacrament of Baptism derives its virtue of cleansing man from sin from the redeeming death of Christ upon the cross. The cross is the battle-flag or standard of Christ, and in baptism we are to swear fealty to this standard. We are to glory only in Christ crucified, and to fight and conquer under the flag of the cross. But we should also with Christ take up the cross and carry it after him, remembering that the way to heaven is a way of self-denial and suffering; and of all this man is to be reminded on his first entry into the Christian Church. The priest makes the sign of the cross upon the forehead and on the breast of the child, saying: “Receive the sign of the cross upon thy forehead, and in thy heart; receive the faith of the heavenly commandments, and let thy manners be such that thou mayest now be the temple of God.” This is to give us to understand that we should always carry the cross as a heavenly seal in our mind and in our heart, and shut them against every sin. Finally, we are to be reminded that,

through baptism, we belong to Christ, and must therefore be prepared to make open profession of our faith in him by word and deed. Our Saviour says: "Whosoever shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. x. 33).

Simon—What is the signification of the salt which the priest puts into the mouth of the child?

Pastor—As we make use of salt to preserve things from corruption, this ceremony expresses the prayer that Christ would, by the grace of the sacrament, preserve the soul of the child from the corruption of sin. Salt is, moreover, a figure or emblem of wisdom, inasmuch as it seasons and gives a relish to all things; and therefore this ceremony also expresses the wish that Christ would fill the soul of the child with true wisdom and prudence. St. Paul, writing to the Colossians (chap. iv. 6), says: "Let your speech be always in grace seasoned with salt."

Simon—Now the various exorcisms follow.

Pastor—I have already spoken of the exorcisms of the evil spirit on another occasion. In baptism they indicate that by original sin man fell into the power of Satan, and that the grace of the sacrament is to ransom him from the dominion of Satan, and transfer him to the kingdom of God and the communion of the saints.

Simon—If I mistake not, the child is now carried to the baptismal font.

Pastor—You are right. The priest lays the extremity of his stole upon the infant, and introduces it into the church. This is to express that the child is now placed under the power and protection of Christ, and that now the right is conferred upon it to appear in the Christian temple, and that for the future it may be regarded as one of the faithful. In introducing the child, the priest says: "Come into the temple of God, that thou mayest have part with Christ, unto everlasting life. Amen." Having entered into the

church, the priest, jointly with the godfather and godmother, in the name of the child, recites aloud the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. This was the custom of old when chiefly adults were baptized. After having been thoroughly instructed in the Christian doctrine, and when the above ceremonies had been performed, they were solemnly introduced into the Christian temple, and vested with the right of reciting these prayers in future together with the faithful.

Simon—The priest also touches with spittle the ears and nose of the child.

Pastor—I must commend you, Simon, for your close observation, and for the excellent manner in which you remember the order of the various ceremonies. In imitation of Christ, who cured with his spittle the man that was deaf and dumb, the priest moistens his finger with his spittle, and touches first the ears of the infant, saying: “Ephpheta”—“*Be thou opened*”; then the nostrils, adding these words: “Unto the odor of sweetness.” By this ceremony the Church instructs the Christian always to have his ears open to the teachings and admonitions of Christ, and earnestly to strive, by a virtuous life, to be a sweet and agreeable odor unto God, according to the beautiful words of St. Paul: “We are unto God the good odor of Christ, . . . to them that are saved the odor of life unto life” (2 Cor. ii. 15, 16).

Simon—What follows next?

Pastor—The priest now asks the question: “Dost thou renounce Satan, and all his works, and all his pomps?” and the sponsors, on behalf of the child, answer: “I do renounce them.” Thus the neophyte solemnly vows and binds himself to abandon Satan, and to have nothing to do with his works—that is, with the works of darkness and sin—and to disregard the maxims and vanities of the world; he promises, after the teachings of St. Paul, to cast off the works

of darkness, and put on the armor of light—namely, a pious and holy life (Rom. xiii. 12). Formerly these questions were addressed, in the most impressive manner, to the catechumens, and only after they had given the most solemn assurance to comply with these obligations was baptism administered to them.

Simon—Why is the child anointed with oil on the breast and between the shoulders ?

Pastor—Among the ancients the gladiators and wrestlers were anointed with oil to strengthen them and make them supple. Now, since the neophyte is in future to fight against Satan and his allurements, this ancient rite is performed to typify this spiritual combat, and the more vividly to remind him of his future duties. St. Ambrose says : “ You have been anointed as a soldier of Christ ” ; and St. Chrysostom : “ Those about to be baptized are anointed after the manner of the gladiators and wrestlers who are about to enter the arena.” The anointing of the breast is to signify the necessity of fortifying the heart with heavenly courage to resist manfully the attacks of Satan and the world ; and the unction between the shoulders is to signify the necessity of divine grace resolutely and patiently to bear the yoke of God’s law, and to support with resignation the crosses and adversities of this mortal life. The words which the priest uses at this ceremony are : “ I anoint thee with the oil of salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord, that thou mayest have eternal life.”

Simon—Now, I believe, baptism is administered.

Pastor—Yes. According to the ordinance or command of Jesus Christ himself, the priest pours water upon the head of the child three times, in the form of a cross, saying at the same time : “ N., I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” These words remind us that by baptism we have become followers of the Tri-une God, and have been changed into temples of the Most Holy Trinity.

Simon—Is not the child anointed with oil once more after baptism ?

Pastor—It is. This unction is made on the top of the head with holy chrism—that is to say, with a mixture of oil and balm—which, together with the oil of the catechumens, is blessed by the bishop on Holy Thursday. This unction with chrism indicates, 1) That in baptism we are made partakers with Christ, for *Christ* signifies *anointed*. 2) This unction also indicates the dignity to which the neophyte has been raised. Formerly it was customary, as we know from the Holy Scriptures, to anoint the heads of kings and priests ; in baptism the Christian is united with Christ, the Chief-Priest and the King of heaven and earth, and thus he is made partaker in some manner of his dignity of King and Priest. St. Peter in his first epistle (ii. 9) calls all Christians a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. In a certain sense all Christians are indeed priests, because they take part in the Holy Sacrifice which the priest offers at the altar, and which they offer with him ; and then, also, because every one ought to offer himself as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God (Rom. xii. 1). And in a higher or spiritual sense, Christians are also kings, because they are to govern themselves and conquer their own hearts and evil inclinations, and because, moreover, by virtue of baptism they have acquired the right to heaven ; they are children of God, the Chief and Eternal King, and therefore also heirs of God and co-heirs of his Son, Jesus Christ. 3) The unction with chrism also shows that the soul of the newly-baptized Christian is made a beautiful temple of the Holy Ghost, and a chosen vessel, in which one day the precious blood of Jesus Christ, received in Holy Communion, is to be reserved in a far more fitting manner than in chalices of gold and silver. Now, as the Church first consecrates the chalices of gold and silver used at the altar, so the neophyte is first fitted for the reception of the sacred flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, and

sanctified by the unction with chrism. The prayer which the priest recites on this occasion is as follows: "May the Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has regenerated thee by water and the Holy Ghost, and who has given thee remission of all thy sins, anoint thee with the chrism of salvation in the same Jesus Christ our Lord, unto life everlasting. Amen."

Simon—What is the meaning of the white covering put upon the head of the child after baptism?

Pastor—Formerly, as you already know, the adults who had been baptized were clothed in white robes, to signify the purity and innocence which they received in baptism. These white garments they wore for the space of eight days, and then laid them aside in church. Hence the Sunday after Easter is called, in the language of the Church, "dominica in albis," or "Sunday in white," and Pentecost is popularly called "Whitsunday," because the eve of Easter and Pentecost was the time generally chosen to baptize those catechumens who were sufficiently instructed. In memory of this ancient custom, a white linen cloth is laid upon the head of the child instead of the white garment. In putting this white linen upon the child the priest says: "Receive this white garment, which thou mayest carry unspotted before the judgment-seat of our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou mayest have eternal life."

Simon—I don't remember anything else now that would require explanation.

Pastor—The priest next puts a lighted candle into the hand of the sponsors, to signify, 1) That the neophyte has been born from darkness to light. "You were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord. Walk ye as children of the light" (Ephes. v. 8). 2) That our faith must not be cold and lifeless, but living and active; and that we should bear a glowing love for God in our hearts, and be prepared to consume ourselves in the service of God and our neighbor.

as the wax of the burning candle is consumed. 3) That our edifying example and our virtuous deeds should be a shining light for our neighbor. "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. v. 16). 4) That we should appear one day before the Heavenly Judge, provided with good works, and thus resemble those prudent virgins spoken of in the parable, who supplied their lamps with oil in good time, in order not to be dismayed on the arrival of the bridegroom. Hence the priest uses the following words at this ceremony: "Receive this burning light, and keep thy baptism without reproof; keep the commandments of God, that when our Lord shall come to his nuptials, thou mayest meet him, together with all the saints, in the heavenly court, and mayest have eternal life for ever and ever. Amen."---These are the principal ceremonies of baptism, and I hope their explanation will prove both edifying and useful to you.

Simon—I have no doubt all here present have derived no less pleasure than profit from your explanation; one can derive so much greater gratification from witnessing the administration of the sacraments, when one understands the deep meaning attached to all these ceremonies. Now I would like to ask you what is the object of the sponsors?

Pastor—Originally they were witnesses of the baptism, and such they are even now. But besides this they are the spiritual parents of those in whose name they have answered, and are sureties for the performance of the promises made on behalf of their god-children. If, therefore, the natural parents of their god-children should die before the latter have been sufficiently instructed in the faith, it becomes their duty, in case of necessity, to see to it that the proper instruction is given to them. Besides this, a spiritual relationship arises between the sponsors and the child, which constitutes an impediment to valid marriage; so that

a godfather could not marry his godchild without first obtaining a dispensation from the bishop.

Thomas—Is it true that non Catholics are not admitted as sponsors in the Catholic administration of baptism ?

Pastor—It is really so, and the reason of it you may gather from what I said a moment ago. It is the duty of the sponsors to look after the Catholic education of their god-children ; but can a non-Catholic be expected to do this, or is it likely to give him much concern ? Moreover, the sponsor has to make profession of the Catholic faith on behalf of his god-child ; now, it is highly improper that one should solemnly make profession, in the name of another, of a faith in which he does not at heart believe. But not only are these not admitted, but also those who publicly lead scandalous lives.

Thomas—Why does the Church make use of so many ceremonies in the administration of the sacraments ?

Pastor—The Catholic Church has attached to the sacraments many beautiful and deeply significant ceremonies : 1) To render these mysteries more venerable to the faithful ; and 2) To make them understand the effects of the sacraments, and to remind them of the obligations which they contract in receiving the sacraments.

Thomas—Were all these ceremonies made use of in the primitive Church just as they are to-day ?

Pastor—They were essentially the same from the very beginning. The unctions with oil and chrism, the exorcisms, the breathing upon the person to be baptized, the sponsors, the white garments, etc., were all used in the earliest ages of the Church ; for the Fathers who lived in those days, and whose writings are still extant, speak of them as being universally known—in fact, as coming down from the apostles. Changes have taken place only in some particular ceremonies, for weighty reasons. Originally the person to be baptized was *immersed*, or plunged, into the water, although in

the days of the apostles baptism was also administered by *infusion*, or by pouring the water upon the person. The Eastern Church still administers baptism by immersion, while in the Church of the West, or the Latin Church, baptism by infusion is deemed more convenient, and has become the general discipline. Formerly the ears and nose were likewise anointed with oil, as St. Augustine testifies; but subsequently, in imitation of Christ, spittle was substituted for the oil. And then there were some ceremonies used in the early centuries of the Church, which were afterwards omitted. Thus it was customary, for instance, to give milk and honey to the neophytes, to express the innocence they had acquired by baptism, and to symbolize the sweetness of a life in union with God.

Thomas—Does the Catholic Church teach that children dying without baptism are eternally lost?

Pastor—The teaching of the Catholic Church on this point is that children who die without having been baptized are deprived of the beatific vision of God, which forms the essential happiness of heaven. This doctrine of the Church is based on the words of our Lord: “Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John iii. 5). But she does not teach that unbaptized infants are condemned to the torments of the damned. For, being guilty of no personal sin, the justice of God cannot visit them with the punishments these sins alone merit.

Simon—Do not parents who unnecessarily put off the baptism of their children commit sin?

Pastor—They do indeed, because they expose their offspring to the risk of dying without having received this sacrament, and, consequently, of being excluded from the bliss of heaven. It is the practice of *conscientious* Christians not to delay the baptism of their children beyond one week.

Thomas—In my travels I have met quite a numerous and

respectable sect of Protestants who, on principle, do not have their children baptized at all, till they reach the years of discretion, when they can judge and select for themselves.

Pastor—Infant baptism has been taught and practised in the Catholic Church from the days of the apostles, as may be shown by the testimony of the early Fathers. St. Irenæus, a disciple of Polycarp, who was himself a disciple of St. John the Evangelist, says: “Christ came to save all through himself; all, I say, who are *born anew*, infants and little ones, boys and youths, and aged persons.” Besides him, Origen, St. Cyprian, St. Chrysostom, and St. Augustine, bear the same testimony. Now, whatever the Church has received from the apostles and their disciples cannot be contrary to the directions of Christ. For over fifteen hundred years nothing was known of this sect, which was the first legitimate outgrowth of the principle of private judgment, inaugurated by the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The Anabaptists were the first (in 1522) to reject infant baptism, on the ground that it was not contained in the Scriptures any more than the other points rejected as unscriptural by the author of the Reformation. They were a fanatical body of men, who, wherever they appeared, committed the most outrageous excesses. We read in the Scriptures that whole families were baptized by St. Paul (Acts xvi. 15, 33, and 1 Cor. i. 16). Now, it is more than probable that in so many whole families there were some who had not yet attained the years of discretion. Moreover, if by baptism we are made Christians, and if infant baptism is invalid, then, for many ages before the appearance of the Anabaptists, there could have been few or no Christians on earth; for during all these ages infant baptism was universally practised. And if there be any truth in the words of Christ that “unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,” what has become of the millions who died during those ages, and who, according to the Ana-

baptists, were not validly baptized, because they received baptism before they had reached the years of discretion ?

Let us now proceed to the second sacrament—namely, the SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION.

Simon—Is there any special meaning attached to the word confirmation ?

Pastor—This word is from the Latin, and signifies to make *strong, firm, or steadfast*. This sacrament is called confirmation because, by virtue of this holy mystery, the baptized person receives the grace and strength of the Holy Ghost to persevere steadfast in the faith, and resolutely and fearlessly to confess it before the world. Christ commanded his disciples to remain in Jerusalem after his ascension, “till they should be endued with power from on high” (Luke xxiv. 49).

Simon—Why is oil used in confirmation ?

Pastor—To indicate the effects of the sacrament. As in ancient times the bodies of the gladiators and wrestlers, to whom I have already referred, were anointed with oil, to make them supple and more apt for the contest, so the soul is strengthened and made apt, by the grace of confirmation, to fight against the temptations which menace the faith or an upright Christian life. In connection with the oil we may also think of the olive-branch brought to the ark of Noe by the dove, as a sign that the waters had again receded from the earth, and that the wrath of God was appeased ; hence the olive-branch has been universally adopted as the symbol of peace and good-will. Now, in confirmation the Holy Ghost comes down upon us to make all in us pleasing to God, and change us into an agreeable habitation of God—and where God is, there is peace. The oil used in confirmation is mingled with balsam, and is called *chrism*. The balsam, which is of a sweet smell, denotes the good odor or sweet fragrance of a life of virtue and innocence by which we are to edify our neighbor.

Simon—Why does the bishop anoint the forehead with chrism ?

Pastor—To express that the Christian should put off all human respect, and fearlessly profess his religion by word and deed, mindful of the consoling, but also terrible words of the Saviour : “ Whosoever shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven ; but whosoever shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven ” (Matt. x. 32, 33). For this reason, also, the unction is made in form of a cross. By confirmation the Christian is enlisted as a soldier of Christ ; and as every soldier wears the sign and uniform of his king, and by them is distinguished from others, so the Christian soldier is signed with the characteristic mark of his Lord and King—namely, the cross of the Redeemer—on the most prominent part of his body. Hence the sign of the cross was frequently called the “ seal of the Redeemer.”

Simon—Chrism is also used in baptism.

Pastor—In baptism it is only used in a symbolical manner, to express that by baptism the Holy Ghost has taken possession of the soul ; but in confirmation the unction with chrism is the outward or visible sign of the sacrament. In confirmation this unction is made upon the forehead to distinguish it from the unction in baptism made upon the top of the head.

Simon—This, then, is the manner of conferring confirmation.

Pastor—Another essential part is the imposition of hands on the part of the bishop, after the manner of the apostles. The bishop, extending his hands towards those who are to be confirmed, prays that they may receive the Holy Ghost, saying : “ O Almighty, Everlasting God ! who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants, by water and the Holy Ghost, and who hast given them the remission of all their sins, send forth upon them thy sevenfold Holy Spirit,

the Comforter from heaven, the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the Spirit of knowledge and of piety ; replenish them with the Spirit of thy fear, and sign them with the sign of the cross of Christ, in thy mercy, unto life everlasting. Through the same Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the same Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen."

Thomas—But why this imposition of hands ?

Pastor—I have already observed that in this we follow the example of the apostles, who administered confirmation in this manner (Acts viii. 14). But besides this the imposition of hands also denotes that the person confirmed stands under the special protection of God, and under the providing care of the Holy Ghost. This is most strikingly illustrated in a simile used by Pope Melchiades : "It is of no avail," he says, "for parents to leave to their children, who are still minors, abundant riches and treasures ; they must, at the same time, give to them a guardian and protector, to take care both of the person and the inheritance of such orphan children. So likewise it would have been insufficient if Jesus Christ, by his bloody death, had purchased for us all the gifts and graces of heaven, and on his return to his Father had merely left them to us as an inheritance ; it was necessary that he should also send us the Holy Ghost, who preserves and perfects these graces in us." * In other words, it was not enough that by baptism we were made children of God and heirs of his manifold gifts, but it was also necessary, by the imposition of hands in confirmation, to impart to us the Holy Ghost, as comforter and protector, and, in a manner, as a guardian during our spiritual infancy, that we might be safe, under the shield of his protection, against the assaults of Satan, and

* In Epist. ad Episc. Hispan.

not again easily lose the precious graces received in baptism—particularly the invaluable gift of faith.

Thomas—Was the unction with oil or chrism also employed in ancient times ?

Pastor—That such was the case is attested by the writings of the earliest Fathers of the Church. St. Cyprian writes: “The oil is blessed upon the altar.” St. Cyril of Jerusalem: “The unction, after being blessed, is no longer a simple unction, but a chrism of Christ.” St. Basil: “We bless the water and the oil of unction.”

Simon—Is there anything further to be explained in connection with confirmation ?

Pastor—The bishop makes the sign of the cross with chrism upon the forehead of each one of those that are to be confirmed, saying: “N., I sign thee with the sign of the cross, I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.” After this the bishop gives the person confirmed a slight blow on the cheek, saying: “Peace be with thee.”

Simon—True ; but what is the meaning of the slight blow given by the bishop ?

Pastor—It is given to impress upon the mind of the person confirmed, that henceforth he must be prepared to suffer patiently every affront or injury for his religion’s sake, after the example of the apostles (Acts v. 41), who went from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were found worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.

Simon—And what is the meaning of the greeting of peace which you mentioned ?

Pastor—To express that the person confirmed has now received the grace and peace of the Holy Ghost, and that the true peace of God is chiefly to be found in patient suffering for God and his truth.

Simon—Must a person at confirmation also have a god-father and godmother ?

Pastor.—These are not absolutely necessary, because in baptism proper provision has already been made; but where it is customary to have them, they have the same object as the sponsors in baptism, and assume the same obligations and contract the same spiritual relationship, which however is no impediment to marriage.

Simon.—Now, I presume, confirmation is terminated?

Pastor.—After each one has been anointed by the bishop, he turns towards the altar, and says the following prayer: “Confirm, O Lord! what thou hast wrought in us; show us thy mercy, and give to us thy salvation. O God! who hast given thy Holy Spirit to thy apostles, and who desirest that, through them and their successors, this same Spirit should also be communicated to the rest of the faithful, graciously look down upon us, and vouchsafe that those who have been confirmed may, by the power of the Holy Ghost, be changed into worthy dwellings of divine glory.” He now turns once more to those who have received the sacrament, and addresses to them the following words taken from the Psalms: “Behold, thus shall every man be blessed who feareth the Lord,” and dismisses them with his blessing: “May the Lord bless you from Sion, that you may see the good things of Jerusalem all the days of your life, and may have life everlasting. Amen.”

Thomas.—Why is the administration of confirmation reserved exclusively to the bishop?

Pastor.—The bishops are the successors of the apostles, who alone administered confirmation—doubtless by the ordinance of Christ. In the Acts of the Apostles we read, in the 8th chapter, 14th verse: “Now when the apostles, who were in Jerusalem, had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who, when they were come, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost, for he was not yet come upon any one of them; but they were only baptized in the name of

'the Lord Jesus.'" From this it is evident that the disciples, who had baptized the Samaritans, could not confer confirmation. In extraordinary cases a priest may receive the faculty to confirm by special indult of the Holy See.

We have had occasion to-day to speak of two important sacraments, and during our conference you have had an opportunity of learning the ceremonies and rites, which were also performed for each one of you ; make use of the knowledge which you have acquired of them to realize the meaning of these rites in yourselves during your whole lives. Co-operate with the grace of baptism and confirmation, to gain eternal life, and bring the spiritual garment, with which you were clothed in these holy sacraments, pure and unstained to the throne of the Heavenly Judge.

Before dismissing you, let me add to the number of hymns I have already given you, also the hymn to the Holy Ghost, which the Church sings at Vespers, on the Feast of Pentecost, and which admirably expresses the sentiments which should animate those receiving the holy Sacrament of Confirmation. I mean the

VENI CREATOR SPIRITUS.

Come, O Creator Spirit blest !
And in our souls take up thy rest ;
Come, with thy grace and heavenly aid,
To fill the hearts which thou hast made.

Great Paraclete ! to thee we cry :
O highest gift of God most high !
O fount of life ! O fire of love !
And sweet anointing from above !

Thou in thy sevenfold gifts art known,
Thee finger of God's hand we own ;
The promise of the Father thou,
Who dost the tongue with pow'r endow.

Kindle our senses from above,
And make our hearts o'erflow with love;
With patience firm, and virtue high,
'The weakness of our flesh supply.

Far from us drive the foe we dread,
And grant us thy true peace instead;
So shall we not, with thee for guide,
Turn from the path of life aside.

Oh! may thy grace on us bestow
The Father and the Son to know;
And thee, through endless times confess!
Of both th' Eternal Spirit blest.

All glory while the ages run
Be to the Father, and the Son
Who rose from death ; the same to thee,
O Holy Ghost! eternally. Amen.

CHAPTER II.

Of Holy Communion and the Sacrifice of the Mass.

THE Pastor opened the meeting as follows :

My friends, the most sublime of all the sacraments is to engage our attention this evening—namely, the Most Holy Eucharist, or the mystery of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, present under the appearance of bread and wine.

Simon—We have already anticipated that you would speak of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar this evening. Will you not have the goodness to give us the translation of the prayers recited by the priest when administering the Holy Eucharist ?

Pastor—Most willingly. Holy Communion is given in the following manner : The acolyte, serving at the Mass, in the name and on behalf of those about to receive Holy Communion, recites the general confession, known as the “Confiteor,” which is so called from the first word with which it begins. You are already familiar with it ; it is as follows : “I confess to Almighty God, to blessed Mary ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy apostles Peter and Paul, to all the saints, and to you, father, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my exceeding great fault. Therefore I beseech the blessed Mary ever Virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy apostles Peter and Paul, all the saints, and you, father, to pray to the Lord our God for me.” In this

confession of sins there is at the same time, as you see, expressed a prayer for pardon and remission.

Simon—Is there any special reason for mentioning here the particular saints ?

Pastor—Mention is first made of the Blessed Virgin, as the Queen of all saints ; then follows the name of the Archangel Michael, and in his person we make, as it were, a confession of our sinfulness before all the angels, and implore their intercession for us. We do the same before all the saints. St. John the Baptist represents the ancient covenant, and the apostles Peter and Paul those of the new law. As we cannot briefly call upon all by name, we select one from each class, to represent the others, and only add in conclusion the words : “ And all the saints.”

Simon—What prayer does the priest say after the Confiteor has been recited ?

Pastor—The priest says the so-called “ Absolution ”—that is to say, after the communicants have acknowledged themselves as sinners also before him, and having likewise been asked for his intercession, he makes the latter in the following words : “ May Almighty God have mercy on you, and forgive you your sins, and bring you to everlasting life. Amen.” “ May the almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, absolution, and remission of all your sins. Amen.”

Simon—Does the priest actually grant remission of sin by this absolution ?

Pastor—It is not a sacramental absolution, but only a prayer of the priest, by way of intercession, which may, however, remove from the soul venial sins and remaining imperfections, provided the communicants have the proper disposition of soul. This prayer, therefore, is an exhortation and admonition to the communicants, on the part of the priest, to excite themselves to sorrow and contrition, in order to approach with greater humility and purity to the banquet of the Lord. Hence he shows the adorable Host to the commu-

nicants, saying : “ Behold the Lamb of God ; behold him who taketh away the sins of the world,” and then thrice repeats the words : “ Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof, but only speak the word, and my soul shall be healed,” that the communicants may thus excite in their hearts the sentiments of humility with which the Most Holy Eucharist is to be received. After this he distributes the Holy Communion, making the sign of the cross with the consecrated particle upon each one, and saying to each : “ The body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul unto everlasting life. Amen.” Endeavor at each Holy Communion to weigh well the beautiful teachings and admonitions contained in the words of the priest, and thus render yourselves really worthy of this heavenly food.

Simon—This must assuredly be the wish and resolve of every one.

Pastor—In this connection let me also tell you in what manner Holy Communion is administered to the sick.

Simon—Is the administration of the Eucharist at the sick-bed different from that in the church ?

Pastor—There is no very material difference. I have already told you that in Catholic countries the Blessed Sacrament is carried to the sick with religious solemnity, as you are accustomed to witness in our village. The priest is robed in surplice and stole, and is attended by acolytes bearing burning lights, and usually a number of the faithful follow in procession. On entering the house of the sick person, the priest says : “ Peace be to this house and all that dwell herein.” Then he repairs to the room in which the sick person lies, and places the pax, containing the Blessed Sacrament, upon a table, which should be prepared in advance. This table should be covered with a clean white cloth ; upon it, between two burning wax candles, there should stand a crucifix ; besides this there should be a vase with holy water, and a tumbler with clean water, and a spoon. He now

sprinkles the sick person and the room with holy water, saying : “ Sprinkle me, O Lord ! with hyssop, and I shall be made clean ; wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow ” (Psalm l.) “ Have mercy on me, O Lord ! according to thy great mercy. Glory be to the Father,” etc. Again repeating the anthem “ Asperges,” he adds : “ Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. O Lord ! hear my prayers, and let my cry come unto thee. The Lord be with you, and with thy spirit.” Then he adds the following beautiful prayer : “ O holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God ! graciously hear us, and vouchsafe to send thy holy angel from heaven, to guard, cherish, protect, visit, and defend all who dwell in this habitation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.” The remaining prayers are the same as when communion is given in the church. But when it is given by way of preparation for death, the priest says : “ Receive, brother (or sister), the viaticum of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ who may guard thee from the wicked enemy, and bring thee to everlasting life. Amen.” After having given Holy Communion to the sick person, the priest adds the following prayer : “ O holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God ! we beseech thee, with faith, that the sacred body of our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son, may be available to this our brother (or sister), who has received it as an eternal remedy both for body and soul, through the same Jesus Christ, thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with thee in unity of the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.”

Simon—Why do we receive Holy Communion in the morning, while Christ gave it to his disciples in the evening at the Last Supper ?

Pastor—That we may receive this sacred food with the greater devotion and recollection of mind, and with less distractions ; for in the morning our thoughts are more collected than in the evening, when, by reason of the manifold affairs and events of the day, the mind is likely to be distracted.

This was less to be apprehended with the apostles, who were constantly united with Christ, listened to his divine teachings, and, immediately before the institution of the Eucharist, were still more intimately united with their Master, owing to their fear of the Jews.

Simon—Whence comes it that we must be fasting from midnight when we receive Holy Communion, whereas the apostles first partook of the paschal lamb ?

Pastor—This was ordained to remove the occasions of sinful excesses that had occurred among the Corinthians even in the times of the apostles (1 Cor. xi. 21), and that we might partake of this heavenly food with purity of body as well as of soul. And, besides, it seems a fitting expression of reverence for the Blessed Sacrament, to receive it before we have taken any kind of ordinary food.

Thomas—But this custom could scarcely have been known among early Christians.

Pastor—The custom of receiving Holy Communion fasting, and the precept commanding it, was so well known to the early Christians that we find in the third council of the Church, held in Carthage in the year 397, a canon, the forty-first, which ordains that, “with the exception of the day of the institution, Communion shall always be received fasting.” And St. Augustine speaks of this Christian custom as follows : “It has pleased the Holy Ghost that, to honor so great a mystery, the body of Christ should be partaken of before every other food, for which reason this custom is observed throughout the whole world.”

Thomas—Why do we receive Holy Communion kneeling ? The apostles did not kneel at the Last Supper.

Pastor—We do this because the true and living God, Jesus Christ, is personally present in the Holy Eucharist, to whom we not only owe the sentiments of our adoration, but in whose presence we must also externally show the sentiments of reverence and humility ; and this we do by kneeling down.

St. Paul, writing to the Philippians (ii. 10), says : “ In the *name* of Jesus every knee should bend of those that are in heaven, on earth, and in hell.” How much more should we do this in the *real presence* of Jesus Christ ! St. Augustine says : “ No one eats this flesh, without first having made an act of adoration ” ; and St. Chrysostom exhorts his people, saying : “ Adore and then communicate.”

Thomas—I will concede that it is proper to receive Holy Communion kneeling ; but why this constant change from kneeling to standing, and folding of hands, and the like ?

Pastor—If I have not before given an explanation on this point, I have at least said a great deal from which you might have easily gathered the answer to your question. Standing up, like kneeling down at Communion, is but a symbolical expression of our inner sentiments and feelings. We assume a standing posture more frequently during the paschal time, and on Sundays, in memory of the resurrection of Christ ; so, likewise, during the singing or recitation of the “ Benedictus ” and “ Magnificat,” as a sign of our joy and gratitude for the great benefits of our redemption, which are praised in these two canticles. We stand during the reading or singing of the Gospel to indicate our fidelity and steadfastness in the faith, and to express our readiness to hear and follow the teachings of the Gospel. We pray in a kneeling posture as a sign of humility, because we appear as sinners and vile worms of earth before the infinite glory and majesty of God. It was thus that St. Peter prayed (Acts ix. 40), and St. Paul with the elders of the Ephesians (Acts xx. 36) ; and again he knelt down on the shore, and prayed with those who had accompanied him out of the city of Tyre on his way up to Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 5) ; the three wise men from the East “ fell down and adored ” the new-born Saviour (Matt. ii. 11) ; in the Garden of Olives the Son of God prostrated himself upon the ground and prayed to his Heavenly Father (Matt. xxvi. 39) ; and St. John describes the

four-and-twenty ancients that surround the throne of the Lamb, as “falling down and adoring him for ever and for ever” (Apoc. iv. 10). It has ever been the custom of Christians, through all ages, to offer humble, fervent, earnest prayer in no other than a reverent posture. Tertullian tells us that “if the Christian soldiers in the army of Marcus Aurelius had not, by fasting, and *praying upon their knees*, implored rain of their God, all the rest of the army, which was composed of pagans, would have perished of thirst.”

All that I have said on this point is applicable also to the folding of the hands and stretching out of arms at prayers. If we pray with uplifted or outstretched hands, as we frequently see the priest do at the altar, and as is even customary in some countries among the faithful, we follow therein the example of Moses, who prayed to God upon the mountain with uplifted hands, while Josue and the people of Israel fought against the Amalecites in the valley. We likewise follow the counsel of the apostle, who (1 Tim. ii. 8) says: “I will, therefore, that men pray in every place, lifting up pure hands.” In this posture we call to mind our Saviour, who upon the cross prayed for us with outstretched arms to his Heavenly Father. This posture of the body is, if I may say so, a copy of the cross of our Redeemer; and in imitating the posture of the crucified One, while at our prayers, we thereby declare that through the merits of Christ’s death upon the cross we look for a gracious hearing, and the bestowal of divine favors. If we pray with folded hands, it is as if, with the penitent Magdalen, we clung to the feet of Jesus as to the anchor of our salvation, or as if, with the Patriarch Jacob, we held fast to the angel of the Lord—namely, our dear Saviour, this angel of the great Council—unwilling to let him part until he shall have blessed us, and have given us the assurance that he will obtain for us from his Heavenly Father the graces for which we have asked.

It is true, the exterior posture of the body, of the hands, of

the head, and the other members, has nothing to do with the essence of prayer, for prayer is only an elevation of the soul and heart to God ; yet it cannot be denied that the humble and modest posture of the body exerts a powerful influence upon our sentiments, and excites devout emotions of the soul, and facilitates and aids the inner elevation of the mind. As a man inwardly feels, so he will outwardly show himself ; therefore Mary Magdalen did not implore forgiveness of the Saviour, comfortably stretched upon a soft divan, but she humbly cast herself at his holy feet ; and the woman of whom we read in the Gospel as being a sufferer for twelve years, did not have herself carried into the presence of the Lord seated in an easy, portable chair, to ask to be freed from her infirmity, but she came behind, and with a trembling and reverent hand she touched the hem of his garment. We can hardly believe that a man is really penetrated with the conviction of his misery, filled with true confusion for his sins, or awed by the terrible presence of his Maker, if, in the house of God, he listlessly reclines with back and elbows upon the rear pew, or, with the haughty air of the Pharisee, stands with his hands in his pockets, his eyes wandering over every object around him, and in this posture utters some words that are to pass for a prayer. But if we behold a man in the humble posture of the penitent publican, beating his breast, and with downcast eyes offering his petitions, we may reasonably conclude that he is in earnest about his prayers, that his mind is recollected, his devotion lively and fervent, and his heart really elevated to God. Jew and Gentile, seeing him in this posture, would share with us our conviction, for there is a natural and intimate connection between the external posture of the body and the interior spirit of prayer.

Thomas—True, this is not to be denied ; but why does the Church remove or forbid so much which must, surely, no less contribute to awaken and heighten devotion ? For

instance, why is not Holy Communion administered as it was done by Christ himself, and as he instituted the Eucharist—namely, under both kinds? It seems to me, aside from every other consideration, that it would certainly be more edifying and more beautiful to receive Holy Communion in the manner ordained by Christ—namely, under both kinds—than only under one, that of bread. I must confess this question was put to me more than once, and I was never able to give a satisfactory answer.

Pastor—In that case you are more to be pitied than the Catholic Church. I will, however, gladly give you the reasons why the Church has instituted this discipline. If Christ had positively commanded that Communion should be administered to all the faithful under both kinds, then it would not, certainly, have come within her province to make a change; but inasmuch as this is not the case, and since we receive Christ whole and entire in the Blessed Sacrament under one form as well as under both, reasons or circumstances may arise which would induce the Church to ordain that Communion should be received by the faithful only under one form. These reasons are: 1) That many persons have a natural repugnance to drink out of the same cup or chalice from which others have successively drunk, and some cannot even endure the smell of wine, particularly in cases of sickness. 2) That in cases where the number of communicants is very large, there would be great danger of spilling a portion of the consecrated cup, and thus exposing it to desecration; such accidents could very easily happen with children, or persons trembling or unsteady from old age, or with otherwise awkward persons. The Church has, finally, instituted the discipline of administering Communion to the faithful only in one kind, 3) in order solemnly to condemn and protest against the error of those who deny the real presence of Christ under each form. At one time, in the fifth century, she even commanded the very opposite—namely,

that Communion be received under both species, under the form of bread and wine—to expose and condemn the error of a sect called Manichees, who, among other absurdities, maintained that wine was a creation of the devil, and for that reason refused to give or receive Communion under the form of wine.

Thomas—But is it quite certain that Christ did not ordain Communion to be received in both kinds? Did he not say also, “Drink ye all of this”?

Pastor—Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, both as a sacrament and a sacrifice—and the latter as an *unbloody* sacrifice, which was to be succeeded the next day, Good Friday, by the bloody sacrifice of the cross. Now, according to the intention of Christ, the unbloody sacrifice of the Last Supper was to be a *true* type of the sacrifice of Calvary. Therefore, in instituting it, he said to his apostles: “Do this for the commemoration of me.” St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, explains these words thus: in commemoration of his death upon Calvary—“for as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink this chalice, you shall show the *death* of the Lord, until he come”—namely, as long as the world shall last, till the second advent of Christ on the great judgment-day (1 Cor. ii. 24, 26). But the Last Supper would not have been a true and perfect figure or type of Christ’s death, if it had been instituted only under the form of bread; for as in Christ’s death upon the cross his flesh and blood were truly, really, and visibly separated from each other, so the separation of the flesh and blood of Jesus upon the cross had to be represented in a mystical symbol by the two separate species of bread and wine. The apostles having been appointed by Christ at the Last Supper as priests of this unbloody sacrifice, they had necessarily, according to the command and example of Christ, to do what he did—that is to say, they had to accomplish the sacred mystery under both forms. Christ says expressly, and in

the manner of a command : “ Do this [the same that I have just done] for a commemoration of me ” (Luke xxii. 19). From the words, “ Drink ye all of this,” spoken only to the apostles, it by no means follows that this command was extended also to the laity. If from these words we could conclude that all the faithful must necessarily partake of the chalice, we would also have to conclude that all the faithful were commanded to consecrate the sacrament, for both the commands, “ Drink ye all of this,” and “ Do this for a commemoration of me,” were spoken at the same time and on the same occasion. We know, on the contrary, that Christ gave many instructions to his apostles in their character of representatives of himself and as pastors of the faithful—for instance, to preach, and baptize, and forgive sins, etc.—that were restricted to themselves in their ministerial capacity.

Thomas—Are any instances recorded where the apostles really administered Holy Communion only under one form ?

Pastor—Not only of the apostles, but even of Christ himself. When the Saviour sat at table with two of his disciples at Emmaus, “ he took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to them ” (Luke xxiv. 30). Here we find mention made only of the form of bread ; and that in this instance Christ really gave Holy Communion to the two disciples, is the unanimous opinion of all the ancient Fathers of the Church. In like manner we read in the Acts of the Apostles (chap. ii. 42) : “ And they were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers ”—namely, those who had been baptized after the first sermon of Peter on the day of Pentecost. In the twentieth chapter, seventh verse, of the Acts, we read of the Christians assembling “ on the first day of the week to break *bread*.”

And, finally, Christ and the apostles constantly attribute to the Eucharist, under the form of bread, the virtue and efficacy of the sacrament, without *alluding* to the chalice. In

the sixth chapter of St. John, fifty-second verse, Christ says: "If any man eat of the *bread* he shall live for ever, and the *bread* which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." St. Paul (Cor. x. 16, 17) says: "And the *bread* which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord? Because the *bread* is one, all we, being many, are one body, who partake of that one *bread*." Now, the body of the Lord, of which we partake, is his living body, which cannot be without the blood, and therefore we also receive his blood. Where St. Paul speaks of unworthy Communion (1 Cor. xi. 27), he says: "Whosoever shall eat this bread, OR drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body *and* blood of the Lord." Whether the one or the other, the bread OR the chalice, be partaken of, in either case the body *and* the blood is received.

It was, moreover, the custom among the primitive Christians, in certain cases, to receive Holy Communion only in one kind. If any one was unable, by sickness or other grave reason, to attend Mass and there receive Holy Communion, it was a common thing for the deacon to bring it to him in his house. The hermits took the consecrated Host with them into the deserts and forests, in order, in the absence of a priest, not to be deprived of Communion. Bishops were in the habit of sending it to each other by the hands of deacons, as a sign of Christian fellowship. During the periods of persecution, the faithful not only received Communion at Mass in the Catacombs, but it was also given to them to take home with them, in order to be able, in the moment of danger, to strengthen themselves with the consolation of the Holy Sacrament. Finally, the Holy Eucharist was carried to the sick as viaticum, and for this purpose it was always reserved in the churches, so as to be ready for any emergency of this kind. But in all the instances I have mentioned it was, without exception, the one form of bread that was received, exchanged, or reserved. In further testimony of this

practice of the primitive Church, I could quote Tertullian, St. Dionysius of Alexandria, St. Cyprian, St. Basil, St. Ambrose, and others.

Thomas—I confess that the reasons which you have adduced must convince every fair mind that it is admissible to give Communion only in one kind; but in alluding to the custom of reserving the Blessed Sacrament in the church, you have raised another question in my mind—namely, whether, in observing this custom, we act in accordance with the intention of Christ?

Pastor—This question, which you may possibly have heard from our opponents, involuntarily reminds me of the loaves of proposition in the temple of the old law, and of the manna of the desert, which was reserved in the ark of the covenant—both types of the Eucharist—and declared as such by the Saviour himself, saying it was more than the manna of the desert—“a bread descending down from heaven.” From the impressive manner in which Christ urges us to eat of this bread, that we may have eternal life, we may safely conclude that it is not against his holy will to reserve the same for use at every moment. But the best manner of learning his holy intention is to consult the primitive Christians on this point. These lived so near to the time of Christ that they must certainly be able to give us reliable information as to what he permitted or prohibited. Now, as I have already observed, the custom of reserving the Holy Eucharist outside the holy sacrifice of the Mass is perfectly familiar to the early ages of the Church. Tertullian,* in the second century, says that in his time the Christians took the Blessed Sacrament home with them to their houses, where they received it at pleasure. In the same century St. Irenæus testifies that the Popes Anicet, Pius, Hyginus, Telesphorus, and Sixtus, sent the Eucharist to the foreign bishops. In the third century Eusebius tells us that St. Dionysius

* *Ad Uxor.*, ii. 5.

of Alexandria sent the Blessed Sacrament to the aged Serapion in his last sickness. Further testimonies to the reservation of the Holy Eucharist are the ciboria and armories in the church, which I mentioned when I gave you a description of the early Christian temples. In the fourth century St. Ambrose tells us that his brother Satyr carried the Blessed Sacrament in a case around his neck, and was in consequence miraculously saved in a shipwreck ; and St. Jerome relates of Bishop Exuperius, that from poverty he reserved the Holy Eucharist in a small wicker basket. In the fifth century we learn from St. Augustine that in his day devout women received the body of the Lord in clean white linen cloths from the hands of the bishops or priests at the altar, and either consumed it in the church, or reverently took it with them to their dwellings, in order, in the absence of a priest or deacon, to partake of it themselves. The same is related by St. Gregory of Nazianz of his pious sister Gorgonia, saying that she kept the Blessed Sacrament in her chamber, and that one day, praying before it in a very grave sickness, she was miraculously restored to health.

Thomas—I did not, indeed, imagine that this custom was so ancient. From this it would also appear how ungrounded and false is the doctrine of those who maintain that Christ is only present in the Blessed Sacrament in the moment when Communion is received.

Pastor—The conclusion you draw is perfectly correct ; for could St. Ambrose and St. Gregory have reasonably believed that it was mere bread which rescued the brother of St. Ambrose from the dangers of shipwreck, and mere bread that the sister of St. Gregory adored in her chamber, to gain relief and help in her sickness ? And besides, why the great care and circumspection exercised in olden times, the same as at the present day, if the faithful did not believe that Christ was present in the Holy Eucharist, even before the moment of Communion ?

Thomas—Can we also defend the practice of publicly exposing the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance, and of giving with it the benediction in form of a cross to the people?

Pastor—If Christ is really present in the Holy Eucharist, then it is but natural that we should adore him as our Lord and God, and publicly expose the Blessed Sacrament for adoration. As regards the benediction with the Blessed Sacrament, let me observe that it is Christ through whom alone we may hope for grace and blessing, in view of the merits of his redemption. During his lifetime he blessed his disciples and the people, and his arm has not since been shortened; even now he is ever ready to bless his faithful followers. Of this blessing the benediction with the Blessed Sacrament is a sign. If, at the moment that the priest elevates the monstrance, we imagine ourselves in the midst of the apostles and disciples upon Mount Olivet, and if in spirit we represent to ourselves the Saviour, in the moment of parting from them, lifting up his hands to bless them, we may rely on sharing his benediction, if, like the apostles, we are worthy of it.

One of the assembly asked why a lamp was kept continually burning in the church before the Blessed Sacrament.

Pastor—If I mistake not, I have already said something on this point on another occasion. This perpetually burning lamp is a sign of our veneration and adoration of the Saviour, who is present upon our altars with his divinity and humanity. Besides this, it denotes the perpetual devotion, the lively faith, and enduring love which we should always cherish toward the holy mystery of the altar; and it is furthermore an expression of the perpetual love of our Lord Jesus Christ, who deigns to dwell perpetually in our midst in the Most Holy Eucharist, and who is ever ready to refresh us with spiritual consolation, to enlighten us with his heavenly light, and to inflame us with the fire of his divine love.—If now you have no further questions to ask concerning

Holy Communion, let us proceed to consider the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

Simon—We have already rejoiced at the prospect of receiving from you an explanation of the Mass ; but I fear we shall weary you with the many questions we shall have to ask.

Pastor—It will be a source of pleasure to me, and at the same time a proof of your attention and interest, if you put many questions, and thereby give me an opportunity of helping you to understand the manifold deeply significant and instructive rites of the Church.

Simon—Has the word “ Mass ” any particular meaning ?

Pastor—There are various opinions as to the derivation of the word Mass. Some derive it from the Hebrew word *mis-sach*, which signifies a *free gift* or *offering* ; others are of the opinion that it comes from the Latin word *dimissio*, meaning *dismissal*, from the circumstance that in the first five or six centuries of the Church the faithful were solemnly dismissed at the end of the Mass by the deacon. This dismissal, properly speaking, took place twice during Mass : the first time after the instruction or sermon delivered immediately after the Gospel ; at this part of the Mass the catechumens, or those from among the pagans who were receiving instruction in the Christian doctrine ; were permitted to be present ; whilst the *disciplina Arcani*, or the Discipline of the Secret, forbade their presence at the principal mysteries of religion, until they should have been fully instructed and admitted into the Church by baptism. Hence, at the beginning of the Offertory, the deacon would exclaim : “ All those who are not permitted to take part in the holy mysteries will now retire.” After the Offertory, Consecration, and Communion were over, the deacon turned to the people a second time, saying : “ *Ite Missa est* ”—Go, the assembly is dismissed, the service is ended. This latter dismissal takes place even to-day.—Others again derive the word Mass from

the Latin verb “mittere,” taking it in the sense of “to send an ambassador, or transmitting by a messenger,” because the priest, as the ambassador of Christ, offers or transmits the unbloody sacrifice to the Heavenly Father. Without laying particular weight upon this interpretation, it is at least the most instructive for you. Thus, St. Paul calls himself and his successors “ambassadors for Christ” (2 Cor. v. 20). But the priest is not only an ambassador of Christ, but, when standing at the altar of the Lord, he is also an ambassador of the faithful, because in the name of the whole people he offers to the Heavenly Father his Divine Son, and presents to him the wants and petitions of all. In this sense the holy Mass may be called an embassy, because through it the faithful transmit their prayers and wishes to God, by the mouth of the priest.

Thomas—Did the apostles themselves say Mass?

Pastor—This is one of those questions, Thomas, that, coming from you, hardly surprise me, although I regret very much that you are so ill-informed upon most matters pertaining to our holy religion, and that you are so ignorant as to have to ask such a question. If in asking this question you refer to the many ceremonies, which are observed by the priest from the beginning to the end of the Mass, in that case I must reply in the negative; these rites and ceremonies were introduced gradually, in order, by means of them, to express the sublimity and signification of the Holy Sacrifice; but if you mean the Mass itself, then I must tell you that it was not the apostles, but Christ himself, who first offered the holy Mass. He did this in the most solemn manner in the moment when, upon the cross, he shed his precious blood and gave up his life as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. But what he did at his death in a bloody manner, that he had already accomplished in an unbloody, mystical manner on the previous evening, when he changed bread and wine into his sacred flesh and blood, and offered himself, under the ap-

pearance of these, to his Heavenly Father as a sacrifice for the world, just as he did upon the cross. What Christ had done at the Last Supper, that was to be continued for all time without interruption ; and therefore he commanded his apostles and their successors in future to offer the same sacrifice in his name and in commemoration of him, to continue to the end of the world the sacrifice which he offered upon the cross. This command is faithfully fulfilled by the successors of the apostles, and the priests of the Catholic Church, and this is what, in the language of the Church, we call the *Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*.

Thomas—But our opponents deny that the Mass is really a sacrifice.

Pastor—In this matter we cannot take our opponents for our guide, but only the Catholic Church, because she alone can tell us what has been revealed and confided to her by her divine founder, Jesus Christ, and what the apostles and their successors, in the earliest days of Christianity, have believed and taught. Sacrifice in general is an oblation or offering of some sensible object made to God by a lawful minister, with the destruction or change of the object, to acknowledge the sovereign power of God, and to render him the homage due to his supreme majesty. The sacrifice of the Mass is the consecration (or change) of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, and the oblation of this same body and blood to God by the ministry of the priest, for a perpetual memorial of Christ's sacrifice upon the cross, and a continuation of the same till the end of the world. According to the Gospel of St. Luke (xxii. 19, 20), Christ, when instituting the Holy Eucharist, said: "This is my body, which is given for you. . . . This is the chalice, the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you," and then he commanded his apostles to do the same—that is, to continue this sacrifice to the end of the world—saying: "This do ye as often as ye shall drink, for the commemora-

tion of me ; for as often as ye shall eat this bread and drink this chalice, ye shall show forth the death of the Lord until he come" (1 Cor. xi. 25, 26). This has been done by the Church, without interruption, through her ministers, ever since the days of the apostles. St. Paul (Heb. xiii. 10) tells us that under the new law "*we have an altar* (and consequently a sacrifice), whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle"—namely, the old law ; and in his epistle to the Corinthians he says : "Are not they who eat of the sacrifice partakers of the altar ? . . . I would not that you should be made partakers with devils ; you cannot drink the chalice of the Lord and the chalice of devils ; you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord and of the table of devils" (1 Cor. xviii. 21). Here the apostle makes a parallel between the partakers of the Christian Sacrifice and those who partake of the heathen sacrifices. As the Jews and pagans first offered their victims upon the altar, and then ate of them, so the table of the Christians, of which he speaks, is an altar, where Christ is mystically immolated, and afterwards partaken of by the faithful. The ancient Fathers, both Greek and Latin, constantly speak of the unbloody Eucharistic sacrifice, which was prefigured by the sacrifice of bread and wine offered by Melchisedech in the Old Testament, and in which, in the new law, as they unanimously declare, we find fulfilled the prophecy of Malachi that a pure oblation should be offered to the Lord from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. This text, together with the one (Heb. v. 6) where St. Paul calls Jesus a "priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech," the Fathers urge to show that the Eucharist is a sacrifice. The sacrifice of the Mass is the same as the sacrifice of the cross upon Calvary. The victim is the same—namely, Jesus Christ ; the priest or principal offerer is the same, Jesus Christ ; for the priest who officiates at the Mass does so in the name of Christ, and therefore, when he comes to the consecration or changing of

the bread and wine, which is the essence of this sacrifice, he speaks not in his own name, but in the name and in the person of Jesus Christ, saying : “ This is my body,” “ This is the chalice of my blood.” It was Jesus who offered himself upon the cross, and it is he who offers himself upon the altar. The only difference is in the *manner* of offering. On the cross Jesus actually shed his blood, wherefore the sacrifice was a bloody one ; while in the sacrifice of the altar he only dies mystically, and therefore this is an unbloody sacrifice. His real death is represented in consecrating separately the bread and wine, to show the separation of his sacred blood from his body at the time of his death. On the cross Christ purchased our ransom, and in the sacrifice of the altar, or the Mass, the fruits of his bloody death are applied to our souls. In the Mass the same Christ who was immolated for us upon the cross is exhibited and offered to God, to obtain for us his grace and mercy, just as the immolation of Christ upon the cross obtained for us pardon and reconciliation with God.

Thomas—In what relation do Mass and Communion stand to each other ?

Pastor—In Holy Communion we receive that which was offered in the Mass—namely, our Saviour, who was immolated for us ; and in thus uniting ourselves most intimately with this Holy Sacrifice, we become ourselves a worthy sacrifice in the eyes of God, and for Christ’s sake our Heavenly Father grants us remission of our sins and enriches us with his graces ; for Christ’s sake he deigns to hear our prayers, to receive our praises, and to grant our petitions.

Thomas—Why is Mass said in the morning, and not at night, as Christ did himself ?

Pastor—For the same reason that, according to the ordinance of the Church, Holy Communion is received only in the morning—namely, to guard as much as possible against distractions, and secure greater attention and devo-

tion during the celebration of Mass. That Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist in the evening was owing to the circumstance that the Jews assembled in the evening to eat the paschal lamb, and that Christ desired for the last time to eat the paschal lamb of the ancient covenant with his disciples, prior to giving himself, the Lamb of the new law, that taketh away the sins of the world, as a spiritual food.

Thomas—Would it not be better, instead of hearing Mass, to listen to a sermon, if the latter afforded us greater edification ?

Pastor—Catholics are by no means allowed to neglect the hearing of sermons or other instructions in the Christian doctrine, if they would be true to their name and vocation, and show themselves worthy followers of the Saviour. And you, Thomas, I would counsel particularly to profit by every opportunity to assist at the usual instructions in Christian doctrine, in order to increase your knowledge of our holy religion, and to correct many of your erroneous views. And even he who possesses a perfect knowledge of the Christian faith cannot, without detriment to his soul, afford for a length of time to dispense with the hearing of the word of God ; for all stand in need, from time to time, of admonition, exhortation, and encouragement, in order not to tire or flag in the practice of virtue, or become careless in avoiding evil. However great may be the importance and necessity of sermons or instructions in the Christian doctrine, yet they can never replace the holy sacrifice of the Mass, or dispense us from assisting at it.

We receive pardon for our sins, and the aid of divine grace, only in consideration of the one offering made for us by Christ upon Calvary ; and every favor God confers upon us, he confers solely in view of that one sacrifice. We can neither receive from, nor give anything to God, save through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is for the sake of Christ that our

Heavenly Father deems us worthy to receive his holy graces, and it is for his sake that he deigns to accept our prayers and our praises, or to grant our petitions. It is for this reason that the Saviour is called our Mediator, or Intercessor—"always living to make intercession for us" (Heb. vii. 25). Now, as we can find favor with God only in consideration of the sacrifice of the cross, so, likewise, can we find favor with him only through the sacrifice of the Mass, because this is identical with the sacrifice of Calvary, for in the sacrifice of the altar the sacrifice of the cross is again represented to God. If, therefore, we would serve God, or if we would assemble together for *divine worship*, we can do so only by assisting at Holy Mass, because the sacrifice of the Mass can alone be truly called *divine worship*, or *divine service*, being alone worthy of God's infinite majesty. It is for this reason that we celebrate or observe the Sundays and festival days of the year by hearing Mass. For, as in the sacrifice of the Mass Christ himself is both the priest and victim, who here presents to his Heavenly Father that same body and blood by which we were redeemed, there can be no better means of adoring God, and offering to him our homage, than by uniting ourselves to this sacrifice of his only Son; there can be no more acceptable thanksgiving than that which is here offered by and through Jesus Christ; no means of obtaining mercy and pardon, comparable to this oblation of the blood of the Lamb, that taketh away the sins of the world; in fine, no more seasonable time for obtaining the favors of Heaven, than when we appear before the throne of grace with him and through him, in whom his Father is always well pleased. This is the fourfold end for which this sacrifice is offered to God. And even when, outside of Mass, we pray to God, we can only look for a favorable hearing in view of the sacrifice once offered by Christ upon the cross, and which he continues to offer upon our altars; so that our daily prayers at home, and the afternoon and evening services in our churches,

are but a continuation of those prayers which we offer to God during Holy Mass.

Thomas—I presume the precept which obliges the faithful to hear Mass on Sundays and holydays is not as ancient as the Mass itself.

Pastor—For a long time there was no need of such a law in the Church, because the faithful were most assiduous in hearing Mass even on week-days. But when the Christians began to grow tepid and cold, it became necessary by a special precept to remind them of the obligation to hear Mass at least on Sundays and holydays. It would certainly be praiseworthy, and to our credit, if we did not need such a precept, but, unfortunately, it is many hundred years since the Church felt the necessity of making this law.

Simon—Would you not also say something of the ceremonies which are observed at the celebration of Mass?

Pastor—It is my intention to devote considerable time to the explanation of these ceremonies, so that you may thoroughly understand everything which may be serviceable or edifying for you; and hence I think it advisable to devote to this purpose several conferences. Before speaking of the ceremonies proper of the Mass, I shall, at our next meeting, speak of some things having an intimate connection with the ceremonies—namely, the sacred vestments, altar utensils, etc. Until then may God have you in his holy keeping.

CHAPTER III.

The Mass—(continued).

OF THE SACERDOTAL VESTMENTS AND THE SACRED VESSELS.

SIMON—This evening Your Reverence will be good enough to explain to us the vestments worn by the priest at the altar.

Pastor—I will most cheerfully keep the promise made you at our last meeting.

Simon—By whom were the vestments that are worn by the priests at the altar introduced ?

Pastor—The vestments worn by the priests were not specially prescribed by the Sovereign Pontiffs or councils of the Church. However wide the distinction that exists to-day between the sacred vesture and the popular dress, the difference was not originally worth noticing. That used in the churches by the ministers of religion was, indeed, of a finer texture and better quality. Time and a variety of circumstances brought about many changes in the garments of worldly guise ; but, amidst all these changes of modes and fashions, the Church, desirous, as far as possible, of keeping her customs, as her doctrines, unchanged, retained around her altars her priests in their original costume, with but little change, attaching to each of them mystical or figurative significations, to some of which allusion is made by the priest in a prayer which he recites when he clothes himself therewith. The greater portion of the sacred vesture consists of the ancient Roman robes of state, somewhat changed

in form, and with some few additions, either for convenience or ornament. The vestments used by the priest in celebrating the Holy Sacrifice are five in number—namely, Amice, Alb and Cincture, Maniple, Stole, and Chasuble.

1) The *Amice*, so called from the Latin *amicire*, to *clothe or wrap about*, is a large piece of linen, not unlike an open kerchief or shawl. It is first placed upon the head, next on the shoulders, and then brought around the throat; to keep it in place, it is furnished with strings at the upper corners, which the wearer ties under his arms. This piece of linen has also been called *humeral*, from the Latin *humerus*, a shoulder, because it rests upon the shoulder.—Previous to the introduction of neckcloths, after the ninth or tenth century, the throat was quite uncovered, and the usual head-dress was a hood or helmet; hence, in the early ages, the head and neck of the clergy, unless some precaution had been employed, would have been exposed to the damp and cold air of the churches, at times when its effects were very dangerous, especially to those who, after loud reading or singing, were obliged to remain under its influence. To guard against these dangers, a large linen cloth was thrown over the head, which hung down upon the shoulders; but when the wearer was about to officiate at the altar, he reverently uncovered his head and enveloped his throat. A similar custom seems to have existed in some places even before Christianity.

2) The *Alb* and *Cincture* constituted the ancient *toga*, the state dress of the Roman gentry. The alb is a white garment, and is put on after the amice. On occasion of festivals the toga was white; when the wearer was unoccupied it flowed loosely about his person, but when he was engaged in business, he was *accinctus*—that is, his toga was girt up, and fastened about him. The *Surplice* and *Rochet*, which are shorter white dresses, may be called a substitute for the alb, and are worn by the clergy when not

taking part in any of the more solemn functions, whilst the alb is always used by those occupied in the principal duties.

3) The *Stole*, which at present is a long, narrow band of the same material as the chasuble, was originally a vestment not unlike the alb, having an ornamented border, and covering the whole person. When this style of vestment was discarded, the band was retained as a memorial of it, and is now worn around the neck and crossed on the breast, and retained in its place by the cincture.

4) The *Maniple*, which to-day is a narrow strip of about the same width as the stole, and of the same material, is worn upon the left arm. Originally it was a handkerchief thrown over the left arm, and derives its name from the Latin word *manus*, a hand, because it was carried in the hand. Others say it was so called by change from *mappula*, a handkerchief. It was intended originally to wipe away the perspiration, and to dry the hands after having received from the faithful the offerings requisite for the Holy Sacrifice. As long as it served the purposes of a handkerchief, it was of linen, but when it became a liturgical ornament, it was made of the same material as the stole and chasuble.

5) The *Chasuble*, the last vestment which the priest puts on to celebrate Mass, was the ancient *trabea*, a robe of state, generally made of embroidered silk, or other fine or rich texture. It was very ample; in the middle of it was an opening for the head; when put on it rested upon the shoulders of the wearer, and hung down on every side, flowing even to the ground. In order to give liberty to the arms and hands, it was gathered up on the sides, and the folds were fastened to the shoulders by loops or cords. When thus looped up, this vesture had, at the front and back, the appearance of rich festoons, while at the sides it was open. This ample-flowing chasuble was in use up to the sixteenth century, after which time it was made perfectly open on the sides.

Simon—You alluded to the mystical signification of the sacred vestments ; would you please explain them to us ?

Pastor—As the sacrifice of the Mass is a representation and unbloody renewal of Christ's sacrifice upon Calvary, the Church has given to every object used in connection with it a figurative meaning, to aid the faithful in meditating upon the sufferings and death of the Redeemer.

The *Amice* is to remind the faithful of how the Saviour became the outcast of his people for their redemption, and was blindfolded, and buffeted, and spit upon, and that therefore they should learn of him to be meek and humble of heart. To the priest the amice is an admonition to be constantly on his guard against the enemies of his soul, and for this purpose to seek divine protection. Hence, in putting on this vesture, the priest beseeches the Lord to “ place on his head the helmet of salvation for repelling the attacks of the evil one.”

In the *Alb* the beholders are to represent to themselves the Saviour clothed in the white garb, in which he was sent back by Herod to Pilate, despised as a fool. From this they are to learn not to be ashamed at sometimes finding the worldly-wise deride and mock the sacred institutions of the Saviour, or the solemn observances of his Church. The alb, from the purity of its color, admonishes its wearer of the purity of mind and body which should decorate him who, professing to put off the old man with his works of darkness, appears in the splendor of his raiment near that Lamb which he is about to serve.

The *Cincture* reminds the faithful of the cord which bound the Divine Victim, when he was dragged by a tumultuous rabble from tribunal to tribunal. The priest, in putting on the cincture, prays that the “ Lord may gird him with the cincture of purity, and extinguish in his loins the fire of concupiscence, that the virtue of continence and chastity may abide in him.” This prayer again reminds him of the

purity of heart and hand with which he should be adorned, according to the words of the royal prophet: "Who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart" (Luke xii. 35).

The *Maniple*, worn on the left arm, is to remind the congregation of the cord by which the Lamb of God was bound to the pillar, when he was scourged for our sins. When putting on the maniple the priest recites the following prayer: "May I deserve, O Lord! to bear the maniple of weeping and sorrow, in order that I may joyfully reap the reward of my labors." Thus this vesture reminds the wearer of the trials and troubles of this life, and teaches him that, if he performs with fidelity his portion of the irksome labor allotted to him, he will be brought with gladness to the recompense.

The *Stole*, crossed on the breast of the priest, and kept in this position by the cincture, is to remind the faithful of the manner in which the Saviour was fastened to the cross, when he was put to death for our sins. The prayer recited by the priest while vesting himself with the stole, and which conveys to him its emblematical meaning, is as follows: "Restore to me, O Lord! the stole of immortality which I lost through the transgression of my first parents, and, though I approach unworthily to celebrate thy sacred mystery, may I merit, nevertheless, eternal joy." The bishop does not cross the stole on his breast, but wears it pendent on both sides, because he already wears the cross on his breast—namely, the pectoral cross.

The *Chasuble*, which formerly enveloped the entire person, represents to the faithful the seamless garment of Christ, for which the soldiers cast lots; or it may also be taken for the purple garment flung upon the shoulders of Jesus after his scourging, and when he was shown to the people by Pilate, saying: "Ecce Homo." For the priest this vestment is an emblem of the charity with which, following the example of

his Divine Master, he should embrace all men. It also reminds him of the submission of Christ to his Heavenly Father, who laid upon his shoulders the sins of the whole world, "He hath burdened him with all our sins" (Isaias liii. 6). Hence he calls to mind the ready obedience with which he should bear the burden of the divine commandments, and carry the yoke of the sacred office entrusted to him by Christ, and, therefore, while putting on this vestment, he recites the following prayer : 'O Lord ! who hast said, 'My yoke is sweet and my burden light,' grant that I may so carry it as to merit thy grace."

Simon—What is the origin of the Cope or cloak frequently worn by the priests at divine service when not saying Mass—for instance, at benediction and in processions ?

Pastor—The cope was originally a cloak, constituting a part of the ordinary vesture, used to protect the wearer against the inclemency of the weather ; it was furnished for this purpose with a cowl or hood, a vestige of which is still found in the cape, bordered with fringe, attached to this vestment. At present this cloak is used only for ornament, and therefore made of rich and costly material. Besides the ornament for which it serves, it may also remind us of the great mercy and unbounded charity with which the Saviour embraced all mankind, even the perverse Jews, for he says : "How often would I have gathered thy children, as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings !" (Matt. xxiii. 37).

Simon—The ministers attending the priest at a solemn Mass also have special vestments, differing somewhat from those worn by the celebrant priest.

Pastor—These ministers are called deacon and subdeacon. The deacon is the first minister attending upon the priest who celebrates solemn Mass. His vesture consists of the amice, alb, cincture, stole, and *dalmatic*. This latter vestment is so called because of the country, Dalmatia, in which it was chiefly used. The Dalmatian robe of state was shorter

than the Roman *trabea*, open at the sides, and furnished with wide sleeves, moderately long. The dalmatic was adopted to distinguish the deacon as the first attendant at the altar. The deacon is permitted to wear the stole, but he does not, like the priest, wear it crossed on the breast, but has it thrown over the left shoulder, and crossed under the right arm. The duty of the deacon is to read the Gospel, to prepare the offerings, to assist at the sacrifice, and to aid at giving the Communion. In the primitive Church the deacons were ordained not only to assist the priest in the celebration of the Mass, but also to receive the offerings of the faithful, and to superintend their distribution among the poor of the faithful. In the discharge of these duties the deacons found it necessary or convenient to carry, slung over the left shoulder, a large napkin, to serve the various purposes of their ministry. The stole of the deacon, worn on the left shoulder at present, is to indicate this ancient usage, and also to show his subordination, he not yet being invested with the full sacerdotal power.

The subdeacon is the next assistant. It is his duty to chant the Epistle, to aid the deacon in preparing the sacred vessels for the sacrifice, to minister to him the wine and water, and assist him in whatever way necessary. He is entitled to wear the maniple, but not the stole. Originally his outer vestment was a *tunic*—a robe made of inferior material and narrower than the dalmatic, and the sleeves were also somewhat shorter and less full. In the course of time the two vestments have gradually become so much assimilated that there is now no difference between the tunic and dalmatic.

Joseph—Why are the boys, who serve at Mass, clad in white surplices?

Pastor—These boys take the place of the acolytes who formerly attended at the altar in albs, or long white robes, and on this account, as well as for decency and propriety, they are clad in cassock and surplice. Another reason is, because

the acolytes represent the angels of God, whose office it is to adore the Son of God when he descends upon the altar, and to glorify him by their invisible presence. Now, angels frequently appeared in white robes; as, for instance, at the tomb of the Saviour when Mary Magdalen and the other women went thither on the morning of the resurrection.

Simon—The privilege of serving Mass is truly an honor and happiness on account of which these little ones are to be envied.

Pastor—It is indeed a happy privilege, which kings and princes and great men of ancient times knew how to appreciate, and they deemed it a distinguished honor to be permitted to attend our Divine Lord at the altar. Would that the boys who are chosen for this holy service would always appear at the altar with becoming piety and recollection, so as to render themselves worthy of taking the place of angels while attending to their sacred duties! I shall particularly demand and expect of parents, in training their little ones, to instil carefully into their hearts truly pious sentiments, that thus they may be made worthy of filling this angelic office.

Simon—Does a bishop, when he says Mass, wear the same vestments as the priest?

Pastor—When the bishop celebrates Pontifical High Mass—that is, when he is attended by all the officers required for a solemn celebration—he wears: 1) *Sandals*, or slippers, of the same color as the vestments. These are an emblem of his office of teaching or preaching, to which, as successor of the apostles, he has been appointed, and which is constantly incumbent upon him, according to the words of St. Paul (Eph. vi. 15): “Have your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,” and “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, of them that bring glad tidings of good things” (Rom. x. 15).

2) The *Pectoral Cross*, worn on the breast, signifies the love

which should burn in the breast of the bishop for the cross and his crucified Lord.

3) Under the chasuble the bishop wears both *dalmatic* and *tunic*, made of light silk, to show that in his person he possesses the orders and powers of the inferior clergy, and that theirs are derived from him as their source.

4) The *Mitre*, or covering for the head, worn by the bishop, has hanging from its back two narrow strips or fillets ; these were formerly two strings, brought round under the chin, to hold the mitre upon the head. This ornamental covering is to denote the dignity and glory to which the God-man was elevated and made great before heaven and earth : “He was obedient even to the death of the cross, wherefore God hath exalted him, and hath given him a name that is above every name.” It also calls to the mind of the faithful the dignity conferred upon the bishop as the representative of Christ.

5) The *Crosier*, or staff, expresses not only the divine aid upon which the bishop relies for support, but also shows that he is the pastor or shepherd to whose care are entrusted the sheep, which he is to feed and lead to the pastures of heavenly truth, that they may be brought above into the fold of the Great Shepherd, whose humble representative he is. On this account the staff has the form of a shepherd’s crook.

6) The Ring, with a precious gem, which the bishop wears on the third finger of the right hand, is the token of the fidelity which he owes to the chaste spouse of Christ, and of the obligation which he has assumed to protect the purity of her doctrine, and the perfection of her morality, with a holy jealousy and an unceasing vigilance. It is customary at present to kneel down and kiss the ring of the bishop on meeting him. In ancient times all the faithful were regarded as forming one common family with the bishop as their head, and as a pledge of this spiritual union, the kiss of peace used to be imparted upon receiving the great Head and Father of

all. From this ancient custom is derived the usage of kissing the bishop's ring.

Simon—Why, everything here tends to edify and awaken pious sentiments. I have also observed that on different days the vestments are of different colors. Is there any symbolical meaning in this ?

Pastor—By the different color of the vestments the Church would teach the faithful the nature of the solemnity which she celebrates. These colors are *five* in number. 1) *White* is used upon the great festivals of the Trinity, of the Saviour, of the Blessed Virgin, of angels, and of those saints who, without shedding their blood, gave their testimony by the purity and the virtues of their lives. 2) *Red*, which is used on the Feast of Pentecost, and on the feasts of the apostles and of martyrs, denotes the love of God to men, and also the love of the apostles and martyrs for God, which they showed by shedding their blood for his sake. 3) *Green* is used on days when there is no special solemnity, and is an emblem of the hope that at the last day our bodies shall go forth from the dust of the grave, to enjoy eternal happiness, just as, when the long days of winter are passed, the verdant plants and shrubs again sprout forth from the bosom of the earth. 4) *Violet* is the emblem of penance, and is used during the penitential seasons of Lent and Advent. 5) The *Black* color is used on Good Friday, to express our deep grief at the death of the Saviour, and is destined likewise to show our sorrow and sympathy on the occasion of funerals and offices for the dead.

Simon—Have the sacred vessels used at the Holy Sacrifice any particular meaning ?

Pastor—I have already explained to you at length the signification and the arrangement of the altar, when I gave you an account of the construction and disposition of the early Christian churches.

Simon—Yes, you told us that the altar represented Christ, the rock of salvation.

Pastor—I need not repeat what I then said. Though the

object of the sacred vessels is one of practical utility, being indispensable to the accomplishment of the Holy Sacrifice, we may yet find in them a symbolical meaning. The *Chalice*, which is destined to contain the precious blood of the Redeemer, may be regarded as the tomb of the Saviour; the fact that it is made of gold may serve as an admonition to adorn our hearts with the gold of divine charity, in order that in Holy Communion we may worthily receive Christ into our souls. The *Paten*, or small plate, upon which the Host is laid, and with which the chalice is covered, may remind us of the stone which closed the holy sepulchre. The *Corporal*, or linen cloth, upon which the Blessed Sacrament is laid, calls to mind the linen cloths in which the sacred body of the Redeemer was wrapped previous to his entombment. The burning lights upon the altar represent, as I have remarked upon another occasion, the mission of our Divine Lord, who is present upon the altar, and who came into the world to enlighten all men; and again they remind us that we should assist at the Holy Sacrifice with pure minds, lively faith, and ardent devotion.

Simon—Why must the chalice and the paten and the other altar vessels be of gold or silver?

Pastor—Before the eighth century we find no special law of the Church requiring these vessels to be made of gold or silver. In the early ages of the Church, we meet with chalices of horn, stone, glass, and even wood, although we also find mention made of chalices of precious materials having been found in the Catacombs. In later ages, when the means of the faithful were more ample, their faith prompted them to give the best and most precious they possessed for the use of the altar, to manifest their reverence for the holy mysteries, as well as to show the inestimable worth of the Holy Sacrifice. In this, as well as in the other ornaments of the Church, the Christians gave proof that they had at heart the beauty and glory of their temples, and they only followed the sentiments of the royal prophet, who said :

“I love, O Lord ! the beauty of thy house and the place where thy glory dwelleth” (Ps. xxv. 8). And if in the ancient covenant, by special command of God, the most precious metals were employed for the sacred vessels of the temple, that were only destined to hold the blood of animals, how much more becoming is it that the living blood of the Son of God be contained in vessels of the richest materials at our command ! It was this sentiment of faith that called forth the discipline of the present day, which requires that the chalice and paten be of gold, or at least of silver lined with gold. We must not, however, look upon this as the chief thing God desires to enter, not into gold and silver chalices, but into clean and pure hearts. But as everything earthly may be for us a symbol of the supernatural, the gold and silver of the chalice may serve to teach us how pure and spotless our souls must be, if we would worthily receive the sacred flesh and blood of our Divine Lord.

Simon—If all the altar vessels, and even the vestments of the priest, are required to be of costly material, why is it that only linen is used to cover the altar ?

Pastor—I will answer your question in the words of Pope Sylvester I. (in the year 315) : “Because the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was buried in clean linen.”

Simon—Why does the Church bless everything that is used at the sacrifice of the Mass, even the vestments of the priest ?

Pastor—To indicate the sanctity of the Christian worship, and to teach that sanctity also behooves those that attend it. By this blessing, moreover, everything destined to the service of the altar is withdrawn from profane use.

Simon—Would you not also explain to us the ceremonies of the holy Mass ?

Pastor—I propose to devote an entire evening to the consideration of the rites of the Mass, and therefore deem it best to defer this subject for our next conference. Until then may God be with you and protect you !

CHAPTER IV.

The Mass—(continued).

THE PRAYERS AND CEREMONIES OF THE MASS.

ON the following evening the Pastor greeted the meeting with “The Lord be with you, my dear friends”; and then continued: Let us at once set about our task, for the matter of this evening’s conference may protract our meeting beyond the usual time. First I must remark that the Mass is composed of different parts.

Simon—Yes, I know: the Offertory, the Consecration, and the Communion.

Pastor—You are right; these are the three parts constituting the Mass proper. But the Offertory is preceded by a preparation, an introductory service, as it were, for the Holy Sacrifice. The part of the Mass preceding the Offertory was formerly known as the “Mass of the Catechumens,” because those under instruction for baptism were permitted to be present at this part only.

The following different parts constitute this preparation for the Mass proper:

1) *The Prayer at the foot of the Altar*.—The priest, having arrived at the altar, and placed upon it the chalice, and prepared the Missal, or book containing the prayers of the Mass, descends to the foot of the altar, and there bows down, with his attendants ranged on either side. Filled with a conviction of his own unworthiness, by reason of his manifold offences, he dreads to begin the august sacrifice,

and therefore, in union with his attendants, who represent the assembled faithful, he beseeches divine mercy in his own behalf, before he ventures to perform the work of the ministry. He first blesses himself with the sign of the cross, to show that all his expectations are founded upon the merits of Him who died for us upon the cross; then, with his attendants, he recites an *antiphon* taken from the Forty-second Psalm, “Judica me, Deus,” together with a portion of the psalm itself. By the words of this psalm he gives expression to his ardent desire to ascend the altar of God, there to offer the Holy Sacrifice. At a very early period the custom was introduced in the assembly of the faithful, of dividing the attendants into two parts, and, by alternate or opposed voices, chanting or reciting psalms or hymns; a particular verse or passage expressing the idea of the psalm, or having special reference to the solemnity of the day, was selected to be sung before and after the psalm, so as to keep the mind more fully occupied therewith. By degrees this selection obtained, by way of pre-eminence, the name of *antiphon*, which means *opposed voices*. This psalm, now used at the foot of the altar, was written by David when he was away from his country to avoid the wrath of Saul; it breathes the fervent longings of the exile for an opportunity of worshipping at the altar of his God, in union with his people. It is, therefore, peculiarly appropriate for expressing the sentiments of the priest about to offer the eucharistic sacrifice. The antiphon is: “I will go up to the altar of God; to God who rejoiceth my youth.” The following are the words of the psalm: “Judge me, O God! and distinguish my cause from the nation that is not holy; deliver me from the unjust and deceitful man. For thou art God, my strength: why dost thou cast me off? and why do I go sorrowful, whilst the enemy afflicteth me? Send forth thy light and thy truth: they have conducted me, and brought me unto thy holy hill, and into the tabernacles.” The

psalm is concluded with the doxology, "Glory be to the Father," etc., and then the antiphon is repeated. Now the priest bows down still lower, confesses himself a sinner, by reciting the "Confiteor," to which I have already alluded ; as a sign of his deep compunction, he strikes his breast, as did so many of the penitents mentioned in the Scriptures ; he then entreats the intercession of the Church triumphant in heaven, and the Church militant upon earth ; his attendants also beseech God to have mercy upon him. He then stands erect, while they, bowing down in the attitude of humility and supplication, confess in turn their sinfulness, and implore the like intercession in their behalf. The priest, having besought in like manner for them, as they did for him, the mercy of God, prays for perfect pardon and remission of their sins. In the following Scriptural extracts he next expresses the joy and consolation which is expected from that mercy which the Lord has promised : "Thou wilt turn, O Lord ! and bring us to life ; and thy people shall rejoice in thee. Show us, O Lord ! thy mercy, and grant us thy salvation. O Lord ! hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto thee. The Lord be with you, and with thy spirit." It is only after this that he ventures to ascend the steps of the altar, still praying that God would take away from him and the assembled faithful their iniquities, so that they may go up with pure minds to the holy place. Having arrived at the altar, the priest kisses it on that spot where the relics are deposited, as a mark of reverence for Christ, represented by the altar, as well as for the saints whose relics are there preserved. At the same time he entreats God that, in view of the merits of the saints whose relics are there present, as also of his other saints, he would vouchsafe to extend his mercy to lessen the temporal punishment that might yet remain due to the sins of him who ventures to approach.

Simon—It is much to be regretted that the faithful cannot join the priest in reciting these humble prayers.

Pastor—Every good prayer-book contains, if not the exact words, at least the sense of the prayers said by the priest at the altar.

Simon—The priest now goes to one side of the altar—

Pastor—And reads the *Introit*, consisting generally of parts of a psalm appropriate to the solemnity, but sometimes it is taken from some other part of the Holy Scriptures. It is called *Introit*, signifying *entrance*, because originally an entire psalm was chanted at the entrance of the clergy and the people, to afford time for all to take their places. Before beginning to read the *Introit*, the priest makes the sign of the cross upon himself, but in Masses for the dead it is made rather towards the book, to express the desire to have the merits of Him who was crucified applied to those in whose behalf he intends particularly to offer the Holy Sacrifice. Having terminated the *Introit* with the doxology, “Glory be to the Father,” etc., in order to offer to the Infinite Majesty his humble homage, the priest goes to the middle of the altar, and there, alternately with his attendants, recites the *Kyrie eleison*—thrice in honor of the Eternal Father ; *Christe eleison*—thrice in honor of the Eternal Son ; and *Kyrie eleison*—thrice in honor of the Holy Ghost. This is a Greek supplication for mercy, meaning, “Lord have mercy on us ; Christ have mercy on us.” It is of very ancient usage.

Thomas—But why should we make use of Greek words in our worship ?

Pastor—As the Church consisted of various nations, having different languages, of which, next to Latin, the Greek and Hebrew were the most extensively used, the Western Church, as a token of perfect communion in faith and government, used some of their phrases in her liturgy. Of the Hebrew she has retained the *Amen*, *Allluia*, *Hosanna*, etc. ; and the *Kyrie eleison* of the Greek. This custom was not established by any law, but gradually spread through the

Church. Neither was the time for saying the “Kyrie eleison,” nor the number of petitions everywhere or always the same. The use of these different languages in the liturgy of the Church is to show, moreover, that by the preaching of the apostles, Jews, Greeks, and Romans have become but one Christian people. As if to prefigure what was afterwards to be effected by the spread of the Gospel, the title, placed upon the cross of the Saviour, was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

Simon—The “Kyrie eleison” is followed by the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*.

Pastor—It is intoned by the celebrant, and immediately taken up and continued by the choir. The opening words of this sublime anthem were first sung by the angelic hosts at the birth of the Saviour in the stable of Bethlehem. It is not known with certainty who composed the remainder, but it was in use, in the same form that we have it to-day, before the Council of Nice in the year 325. At first the recital of this sacred anthem was restricted to special festivals, and then it was recited only by the bishop. Pope Symmachus, in the beginning of the fifth century, extended it to the Sundays and feasts of the martyrs, but priests were only permitted to recite it in the Mass of Easter Sunday. After the tenth century this restriction was removed, and the privilege of reciting it was extended to priests and bishops alike in every Mass that admitted of it.

Simon—Is not the “Gloria” said at every Mass?

Pastor—This angelical hymn, being one of joy and festivity, is omitted on Sundays and ferial days during the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent, and in Masses for the dead. Although this anthem is one of praise and glory to God, the priest does not omit in it to implore of him mercy and forgiveness of his sins. The following are the words of this sublime anthem: “Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will. We praise thee; we bless

thee ; we adore thee ; we glorify thee ; we give thee thanks for thy great glory, O Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty ! O Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son ! O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father ! who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us ; who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayers ; who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For thou only art holy ; thou only art Lord ; thou only, O Jesus Christ ! together with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen."

Before beginning the prayers which follow the "Gloria," the priest again kisses the altar, and, turning to the people, says : "Dominus vobiscum"—"The Lord be with you." (If a bishop be the celebrant, he makes use of the salutation of the Saviour to his apostles : "Pax vobis"—"Peace be with you," and this is most appropriate after that solemn canticle, by which, in the very words of angels, peace is proclaimed, through the heavenly messenger, to men of good will.) The people, or the attendants at the altar in their name, respond, "and with thy spirit." The priest kisses the altar, that he may receive the salute of affection from Christ, represented by the altar ; then, turning to the people, he communicates the blessing to them also. He now returns to the Epistle corner of the altar, and there calls the people to attention by inviting them to pray, saying : *Oremus*—"Let us pray"—and, with extended hands, in the manner of a suppliant, he reads or chants the prayers appropriate to the solemnity of the occasion. These prayers are called *collecta*, or collects. This name is quite ancient, but authors differ as to its origin. According to some, they are so called because they were prayers for the collected assembly ; according to others, because in them the priest presented the collected necessities of the assembly before the throne of God. It is as if the priest had gone round among them and enquired of each what particular relief, or what special favor, he should ask for

him at the hands of the Heavenly Father. He resembles the angel spoken of in the Apocalypse (viii. 3) who collected the prayers of the saints in a golden censer, to offer them on the altar of the Most High. At the end of the collect the response "Amen" is made. *Amen* is a Hebrew word, and means "*be it so.*" Here it indicates the earnest desire of the faithful that God would graciously grant what the priest has asked in their behalf. When pronounced at the end of the *Credo*, it expresses the assent and adhesion of the people to all the revealed truths of our holy religion.

Simon—What follows next?

Pastor—The *Epistle*. This word literally signifies a *letter*; but in the Mass we understand by it any extract or portion of the Sacred Scriptures. As the Jews were accustomed, in their assemblies in the synagogue, to read the writings of Moses and the prophets, the Christians imitated their example, and likewise read portions of the Old Testament. But as soon as the epistles were written the custom of reading the Old Testament gradually died out, and the epistles of the apostles were read instead. St. Paul himself ordained that his epistles should be read in the churches. In some Masses, however, extracts from the Old Testament are still retained. We find, moreover, that the Acts of the Martyrs were likewise frequently read. The reading of these Scriptural extracts served both to instruct the faithful, and to animate them to a pious and exemplary life, according to the words of St. Paul (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17): "All Scripture divinely inspired is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice: that the man of God may be perfect, furnished unto every good work." Therefore, too, the server at the Mass at the conclusion of the Epistle answers: "Deo gratias"—"Thanks be to God"—as an evidence of the gratitude we owe to God for having led us to the knowledge of divine truth by the teachings of the prophets and the apostles.

Simon—I have remarked that the priest, in reading the Epistle, does not hold his hands extended, but lays them upon the missal.

Pastor—This, also, has a mystic meaning. By it the priest is reminded of the obligation resting upon him, not only of *reading* the law, but also of *doing* what is prescribed by it, the hands being indicative of labor.

The Epistle is followed by a few verses taken from the Psalms, or from some other part of Holy Scripture, followed by an Alleluia, repeated twice, to which is added another verse, with one Alleluia at the end. These verses are called the “Gradual,” because they were read or chanted from the steps (*gradus*) of the *Ambo*. The ambo, as I have already told you, was a pulpit from which the Epistle and Gospel were formerly chanted, and from which the bishops frequently preached. In times of penance, when the Alleluia is not said, there is added to the Gradual, instead of it, what is known as the *Tract*. The Tract is composed of three or four verses taken from the Psalms. It has received this name from the circumstance that its chant was slow and drawn out, from the Latin word *tractus* = drawn out. The book is then removed to the Gospel side of the altar—that is, to the right side of the crucifix, but the left of the congregation. It is designated as the Gospel side, because the Gospel is there read or chanted. The Gospel, as you all know, is a chapter, or part of a chapter of one of the four Gospels, chosen with especial reference to the solemnity of the occasion. The Gospel has always been regarded as one of the principal parts in the preparation for the Mass proper, and therefore the priest calls upon God to cleanse his heart and his lips, before he ventures to announce the same. Bowed down before the middle of the altar, he first recites the following prayer: “Cleanse my heart and my lips, O Almighty God! who didst cleanse the lips of the prophet Isaias with a burning coal; and vouchsafe, through thy gracious

mercy, so to purify me that I may worthily proclaim thy holy Gospel. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

Before beginning the Gospel he makes the sign of the cross upon his forehead, his lips, and his breast, to show that he will profess the faith of his crucified Redeemer, by open exhibition, by words, and in his heart. He had previously marked the same sign upon the book, where the Gospel begins, to show the source whence that faith is derived.

Simon—Why are the Epistle and Gospel read on different sides of the altar ?

Pastor—The changing of the book from the Epistle side to the Gospel side of the altar was originally done for a practical reason. It was customary for the priest to read the prayers and lessons which did not belong to the Mass proper, on the left side of the altar. But when the time for the Offertory arrived, the book was removed to the other side, to make room for the offerings of the people, which were there deposited. And even at present, it is necessary to remove the book to the other side, for the convenience of the servers who hand the wine and water to the priest, and offer the water for the washing of his hands. Independently of this practical reason, a symbolical signification has also been given to this custom—namely, to show the transfer of the law and authority from the priesthood of Aaron to that of the apostles. At the conclusion of the Gospel the server answers : "Praise be to thee, O Christ !" In these words we express our gratitude to the Redeemer for the boon of his heavenly teachings.

Simon—We ought, indeed, to consider it a great happiness to have received everything taught by the apostles, pure and unaltered, from the one, true, Catholic Church.

Pastor—The priest also kisses the book as a token of his affection and esteem for the holy word of God. From this practice there came the usage, observed in some countries, of

kissing the Bible when taking an oath in courts of justice, or before persons authorized to administer it.

Simon—At Solemn High Mass, when the celebrant is assisted by a deacon and subdeacon, there are different ceremonies.

Pastor—At Solemn High Mass the ceremonies at this part of the Mass are imposing and full of meaning. As soon as the celebrant has passed from the middle of the altar to the Gospel side, the deacon receives the Gospel book from the master of ceremonies, and places it upon the altar immediately in front of the tabernacle. When the celebrant has concluded the reading of the Gospel, which he says in a low voice, he returns to the middle, and there, aided by the deacon, puts incense into the thurible. The deacon now descends one step and recites on his knees the “*Munda cor meum*,” or prayer preparatory to the Gospel; then, going up to the altar, he takes from it the book of the Gospels, kneels down with it before the celebrant, and asks the latter’s blessing. The custom of laying the book upon the altar, and taking it thence, is retained at present only on account of its mystic meaning—namely, to show that this divine law had its origin in Christ, whom the altar represents. This practice was originally introduced from the great respect in which the Gospels were held by the first Christians. The Gospels were not bound in the same volume with the Epistles, psalms and collects, but were kept separate, and brought with great ceremony from the sacristy, to be laid upon the altar before the Mass began. They were frequently bound in massive covers of gold or silver, and studded with precious stones. Even the cases in which the sacred volumes were kept when not in use were made of the choicest materials.—The deacon, having received the blessing of the celebrant, proceeds to make the solemn promulgation of the divine law. In going to the place on the right side of the sanctuary where the Gospel is sung, the deacon is preceded

by two acolytes, having lighted candles, the censer-bearer with the censer, and the subdeacon. During the chanting of the Gospel the subdeacon holds the book for the convenience of the deacon. Having given the usual salutation, "The Lord be with you," and announced the title, "The following of the Gospel according to Matthew," or whichever Evangelist it may be, the deacon receives the censer, and thrice incenses the book, in the middle, at the right, and at the left. The text is chanted in a loud tone of voice, in imitation of the solemn tone in which the ancient heralds of the East proclaimed the laws to the people. At the termination he points it out to the subdeacon with the remark, "These are the sacred words." The subdeacon immediately proceeds to point them out to the celebrant in the same words; the priest then kisses the Gospel as a token of his affection, declaring at the same time, "I believe and acknowledge," or uttering the prayer, "By the words of the Gospel may our sins be blotted out."

Simon—What is the meaning of the lighted candles and the incense used at the solemn chanting of the Gospel?

Pastor—The lighted candles are here employed to indicate how the word of God illumines the understanding, chasing the vapors of passion, and banishing the darkness of ignorance. The incense is used on this occasion to commemorate what St. Paul says (2 Cor. ii.): that we are the good odor of Christ unto God in every place.

Simon—Why does the deacon turn to the side while chanting the Gospel?

Pastor—When the position of the altar was changed, so that the celebrant no longer looked towards the congregation, but had his back turned to the people, he turned rather towards the side than towards the back of the altar when reading the Gospel, so that what he read might be more readily understood by those present. After the use of the ambo, from which the Gospel was formerly proclaimed,

was discontinued, the deacon followed the priest in his mode of reading, and piety soon discovered a mystic reason for continuing the practice. The Gospel is chanted with the sacred text facing the north, to show that the preaching of the Lord was specially directed against the great adversary of man, Lucifer, who said : " I will establish my seat in the north, and will be like the Most High " (Isaias xiv. 12).

Simon—The Gospel, then, ends the Mass of the catechumens.

Pastor—If there was no sermon the catechumens were dismissed immediately after the Gospel, and then the Mass of the faithful began with closed doors. Besides the catechumens, those who had publicly denied the faith, and the Jews and pagans, were also compelled to retire. To preserve order and decorum while these different classes left the church (their number in the early days was very large), special doorkeepers (*ostiarii*) were stationed at the outer doors, and the " Credo," or " creed," which follows the Gospel, was not sung till all had departed. For the Christians the Creed, or " symbol," besides being a profession of their faith, not unfrequently became a sign by which to distinguish or recognize each other. After the catechumens and strangers had retired, the deacon, in some churches, warned those present to look at each other, so as to be certain that no intruders were present. This ancient custom may serve as an earnest admonition to us not to assist at the holy mysteries with sentiments other than those of lively faith and holy fervor, because otherwise we deserve, after this ancient custom, to be expelled from the sacred edifice.

The *Credo* is intoned by the celebrant alone, to show that the doctrine was delivered to the faithful by those messengers who had received the commission of the Saviour ; and the choir immediately takes up the strain, to express the alacrity with which the people make open profession of believing what they have thus learned ; for, as St. Paul says,

“with the heart we believe unto justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. x. 10).

Simon—Is the *Credo* said at all the Masses?

Pastor—The *Credo* may be called the transition from the Mass of the catechumens to the Mass of the faithful, and cannot justly be considered a portion of the Mass, as this, correctly speaking, begins only with the Offertory. For this reason it is not said on every day, but only on Sundays, the feasts of our Lord, of the Blessed Virgin, of the angels, and on the festivals of the apostles and doctors of the Church, who, by word or writing, spread or defended the faith. It was first introduced into the Mass in the East, and, no doubt, on account of the heresies which there sprang up from time to time. The Church found herself compelled to demand this profession of faith from all who assisted at the Holy Sacrifice, especially in those churches into which heresy had at any time entered. Later, the usage has become general.

Simon—Are there not several formulas of the Creed used by the Church?

Pastor—The formula of the Creed is also called “symbol.” This word, which is of Greek origin, used in connection with the Creed, signifies “a compendium of the doctrines, or a summary of the articles, of our holy faith.” The symbol recited by the faithful is called the APOSTLES’ CREED, because, according to an ancient tradition of the Church, and the testimony of several early Christian writers, it was formulated by the apostles before they separated to “teach all nations.” The Creed recited by the priest in the Mass is the same, only more ample and explicit. When the heresy of Arius, who denied that the Son was *consubstantial* or *co-equal* with the Father, was condemned by the Council of Nice, in 325, and the heresy of Macedonius, who denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost, met with the same fate in the Council of Constantinople, in 381, the

articles of the Apostles' Creed were extended and made more explicit. This symbol now took the place of the Apostles' Creed in the Mass. It is generally called the "Nicene Creed," but rather improperly. The name of "Nicæno-constantinopolitan," which is sometimes given to it, would seem more correct.—Besides these two symbols, there is another used by the Church in her public prayers, however not at Mass, but in the office or breviary recited by the clergy—namely, the "*Athanasian symbol*," in which the doctrine of the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and of the Incarnation are more fully set forth.—Now let us proceed to the Mass proper, which begins with—

The Offertory.—The word Offertory has a double meaning. In a more restricted sense it signifies the verse or antiphon recited as introduction to the act of oblation. But, in a more extended sense, we may consider the whole office, from this to the Preface, under the general name of Offertory. After saluting the people with the "*Dominus vobiscum*," and having invited them to pray with him by the "*Oremus*"—"Let us pray," the priest recites the antiphon alluded to, and then proceeds to offer the bread and wine. The antiphon, or so-called "Offertory," similar to the "Introit," expresses the idea of the solemnity or festival that is being celebrated, and suggests to the faithful how to offer to God the prayers which follow, with reference to the solemnity of the occasion.—Originally it was customary for the faithful at this point to bring to the altar the offerings of bread and wine. Besides these they also offered provisions—oil, wax, grain, milk and honey, etc. After what was necessary and proper for the altar was selected, the remainder was sent to the bishop's residence, for the maintenance of the clergy and the support of the poor. In subsequent times, when the piety and munificence of the faithful furnished the Church with fixed revenues, these oblations on the part of the people were discontinued. In other

places the offerings in kind were changed into donations in money, and instead of being brought to the altar, they were received in the pews throughout the church. A vestige of the ancient manner of making the offerings is still found in the Masses of ordination, where those receiving Holy Orders present wax-candles to the bishop ; also in the Mass of consecration of a bishop, where the newly-appointed prelate offers two lighted candles, two loaves of bread, and two ornamented small barrels of wine.

Thomas—I had no idea that the custom of taking up collections in the church was really of such ancient origin.

Pastor—When the offerings necessary for the Holy Sacrifice, and the communion of the faithful, had been selected, the celebrant laid them upon the altar, offering them to God in words of prayer and benediction. The same is done at present, with this difference, that the bread and wine is prepared in advance. The celebrant, lifting the paten with both hands, presents to the Lord the bread that is to be consecrated ; and, making the sign of the cross with it over the altar, he places the bread upon the corporal.

Simon—What prayers does the priest say during the Offertory ?

Pastor—Whilst offering the bread he prays : “ Accept, O holy Father, almighty, eternal God ! this immaculate Host, which I, thy unworthy servant, offer unto thee, my living and true God, for my innumerable sins, offences, and negligences ; and for all here present ; as also for all faithful Christians, both living and dead ; that it may be profitable for my own and for their salvation unto life everlasting. Amen.” After the oblation of the bread, the priest puts wine and water into the chalice. The wine is poured into the chalice without either a blessing or a prayer ; but in adding the water the priest makes the sign of the cross over it, and recites the following prayer in the meantime : “ O God ! who didst wonderfully form the substance of human nature,

and more wonderfully still regenerate it, grant us, by the mystery of this water and wine, to be united with the divinity of Him who deigned to become partaker of our humanity, thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen."

Thomas—Why is water put into the wine ?

Pastor—The natural reason for mixing a few drops of water with the wine is to imitate the example of the Saviour, who undoubtedly did the same at the Last Supper ; for in the East it was the custom always to temper the wine, before drinking it, with a little water. This custom has, however, also a mystic reason. In the first place, it signifies the union of the humanity with the divinity of Christ. It is, secondly, intended to remind us of the close union between ourselves and our Lord—a union so close that we are said to partake, in a measure, of his divinity, as he partook of our humanity. This is implied in the prayer which I have just quoted. While offering the chalice, the priest recites the following prayer : " We offer unto thee, O Lord ! the chalice of salvation, beseeching thy clemency, that in the sight of thy divine majesty it may ascend with the odor of sweetness, for our salvation, and that of the whole world." Bowing down, he continues : " In the spirit of humility, and with a contrite heart, let us be received by thee, O Lord ! and grant that the sacrifice we offer in thy sight this day may be pleasing to thee, O Lord God !" Then raising himself, and looking up to heaven, he implores the descent of the sanctifying Spirit in the following prayer : " Come, O Sanctifier, Omnipotent, Eternal God ! and bless this sacrifice, prepared to thy holy name." In commenting upon this prayer Pope Benedict XIV. says that it is addressed to the third person of the Blessed Trinity (the only instance in the Mass where the Holy Ghost is invoked expressly by name), in order that, as the body of our Blessed Lord was formed by the power

and operation of the Holy Spirit in the chaste womb of the Blessed Virgin, it may be formed anew by the same Spirit upon the altar of God." In Solemn High Mass incense is brought on the altar after this prayer, and the offerings, the altar, and its ministers are incensed.

Simon—I have noticed that the priest washes his fingers during the Offertory. Is there any signification in this ?

Pastor—Originally the washing of the hands was occasioned by necessity ; the bishop or priest, in receiving and selecting the various offerings, could not avoid soiling his hands, and therefore an ablution became necessary. At present the washing of the fingers is retained as a symbol of the purity which should adorn our souls in taking part in the Holy Sacrifice. Yet this mystic signification is nothing new. Even in the days of St. Cyril, who was Bishop of Jerusalem in the fourth century, the washing of the hands at the altar was regarded as an emblem of purity of soul. Addressing his neophytes, St. Cyril says : " You have seen water brought by the deacon, with which the officiating priest, and the other priests who stood round the altar, washed their hands. Do you think that was done for the sake of bodily cleanliness ? No, indeed, for we are accustomed to enter the church purified ; . . . but this washing of the hands should show to us that we ought to be free from all sin ; for as our deeds are represented by our hands, it has the signification, when we wash our hands, we cleanse our deeds." Therefore, too, the celebrant repeats during this ablution the following seven verses of the twenty-fifth Psalm : " I will wash my hands amongst the innocent ; and will compass thine altar, O Lord ! that I may hear the voice of thy praise, and tell of all thy wondrous works. I have loved, O Lord ! the beauty of thy house : and the place where thy glory dwelleth. Take not away my soul, O God ! with the wicked : nor my life with bloody men : in whose hands are iniquities : their right hand is filled with gifts. But as for

me I have walked in mine innocence : redeem me, and have mercy on me. My foot has stood in the direct way : in the churches I will bless thee, O Lord !” To this he adds the doxology of “Glory be to the Father,” etc. Going then to the middle of the altar, the celebrant, bowing down, with hands joined in supplication, prays to the Holy Trinity to accept the sacrifice which is about to be offered, that it may be to God the testimony of adoration, that it may redound to the honor of the saints, who are with him in heaven, and conduce to the salvation of those present, and of all the Church. He next kisses the altar as a token of his gratitude to God, and of his trust in the Saviour, turns round to the congregation, and, extending his arms, like one in earnest supplication, he beseeches his brethren to pray with him, saying : “Pray, brethren (*Orate, fratres*), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the Almighty Father.” They answer by the expression of the sincere desire that it may be received by the Almighty, to the honor and praise of his holy name, to their own benefit, and to that of the whole Church. Now the priest recites in a low voice the prayers called “*Secretæ*”—secret. In meaning and number they always correspond to the collects read at the beginning of Mass. In all probability these prayers received the name of “secret,” because, in ancient times, they were recited *secretly*, or in a low voice, so as not to disturb the singers, who were stationed in the rear of the altar, in the part called the choir, and who chanted an anthem or hymn while the people presented their offerings. This custom, like many others which really had their origin in High Mass, was, for the sake of uniformity, retained also in Low Mass. The last prayer of the *secretæ* terminates the Offertory. With this let us conclude our instruction for this evening.

CHAPTER V.

The Prayers and Ceremonies of the Mass (continued)—From the Preface to the End of the Mass.

PASTOR—Our last conference, my dear friends, brought us to—

The Preface.—This is a prefatory prayer to the Canon, or chief part of the liturgy, or an invitation to praise God. In High Masses the Preface is chanted. It is preceded by the usual salutation of *Dominus vobiscum*. At other times, when the priest chants or says this salutation, he turns to the people, but here he does not, out of respect for the offerings lying before him, and which he is about to consecrate.

Simon—Does not the Preface begin with *Per omnia sæcula sæculorum*?

Pastor—These words are the conclusion of the last prayer of the *secretæ*; they are chanted or pronounced in a loud voice, to give the people notice that the prayer is ended, and to give them an opportunity of answering *Amen*. After the *Dominus vobiscum* has been responded to, the priest invites the people by *Sursum corda* to lift up their hearts; they answer, *Habemus ad Dominum*—"We have them lifted to the Lord." He continues: *Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro*—"Let us give thanks to the Lord our God," and the congregation answers, *Dignum et justum est*—"It is meet and just." He then continues to chant the Preface, commencing with the declaration that it is truly meet and just, becoming and useful, always and in all places, to give thanks

to God for his blessings, but especially on the occasion for which we are assembled ; he then describes the nature of the festival, and the dispositions which are appropriate. Wherefore he calls upon them to render their praises through Jesus Christ our Lord, uniting their humble voices with the angelic host, who sing, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, the heavens and the earth are full of thy glory ! Hosanna in the highest ! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord ! Hosanna in the highest !” The celebrant ceases his chant when he arrives at the *trisagion*, or thrice holy, while the choir continues the thrilling strain.

The portion of the liturgy which succeeds is called the “CANON”; this word signifies a “rule,” and is applied to these prayers because, however the others may have varied, this scarcely differed in the several churches, and few changes have been made in it from the earliest period. The custom of reciting the Canon in a voice inaudible to the people has been derived from very ancient times, and gives us to understand that the change which is effected in the bread and wine is the effect of the invisible and imperceptible operation of the Holy Ghost.—The opening words of the first prayer of the Canon, “*Te igitur*,” are said by the priest, bowing down profoundly, with his hands joined and resting upon the altar. When he arrives at the words, “these gifts, these presents, these holy and unspotted sacrifices,” he kisses the altar, and then, standing erect, he thrice makes the sign of the cross over the offerings. The following are the words of this prayer : “We therefore humbly pray and beseech thee, most merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, thy son, our Lord, that thou wouldst vouchsafe to accept and bless these ✠ gifts, these ✠ presents, these holy, ✠ unspotted sacrifices, which in the first place we offer thee for thy holy Catholic Church ; to which vouchsafe to grant peace, as also to preserve, unite, and govern it throughout the world, together with thy servant N. our Pope, N. our bishop, as

also all orthodox believers and professors of the Catholic and apostolic faith."—The second prayer of the Canon is known as—

The Memento for the Living.—In this the priest begs the Almighty in a special manner to regard those living persons whom he particularly recommends. This memento is worded as follows: "Be mindful, O Lord! of thy servants and handmaids N. and N. [here the priest joins his hands and recalls all those for whom he specially intends to pray], and of all here present, whose faith is known, and devotion apparent unto thee; for whom we offer, or who offer to thee this sacrifice of praise, for themselves and all that belong to them, for the redemption of their souls, for the hope of their salvation and safety, and who render their vows to thee, the Eternal, Living, and True God."

Formerly it was customary to read aloud at the letters N. N. of this memento the names of all those who were entitled to special mention, or whose names had been handed in by the faithful when they presented their offerings. In Solemn Masses the deacon would ascend the ambo, and read the names from folded tablets, called diptychs; but in Low Masses the priest read them from the altar, turned to the congregation. These diptychs contained three columns. In the first column were inscribed the names of the martyrs; in the second the names of those who were illustrious among the living, or held places of distinction either in the temporal or spiritual order. In this same column were also inserted the names of those for whose special intention the Mass was offered, or who contributed bountifully towards the wants of the altar and the support of its sacred ministers. In the third column of the diptychs were enrolled those of the dead who departed life in communion with the Church, but who were not otherwise in any degree remarkable. Though the custom of reading the names of the departed generally fell into disuse since about the fourteenth century,

the practice still obtains, in many churches, of publicly asking the prayers of the faithful, on Sunday after the Gospel, for those who have died during the preceding week.

The Memento for the Living is followed by the third prayer—

The “Communicantes”—so called from its opening word. In English it reads as follows : “Communicating with, and honoring the memory, in the first place, of the ever-glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, as also of the blessed apostles and martyrs, Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Thaddæus, Linus, Cletus, Clement, Xystus, Cornelius, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian, and all thy saints, by whose merits and prayers grant that we may be aided in everything, and fortified by thy help ; through the same Christ our Lord.”

Simon—Why is particular mention made of these saints in connection with the names of the apostles ?

Pastor—In the primitive times of Christianity it was customary in the Canon to mention the names of those who, as martyrs, had shed their blood ; but when the number of the martyrs increased, and time would not permit to name all of them, only the names of those were retained who had won for themselves the crown of martyrdom in the very earliest period of the Church, and which were mentioned in the Western or Roman Church. And even these are not all mentioned here ; in the prayers after Consecration you shall find still others. Having, up to this, prayed with his hands extended, the priest now spreads them over the oblation. This was the ancient manner of blessing. This ceremony, moreover, recalls the rite of the Old Testament, according to which the Jews were required to lay their hands upon the head of the victim before it was slain by the high-priest. This ceremony indicated that the person bringing the offering indeed deserved to shed his own blood for his sins, but

that, in the meanwhile, he offers in his stead this victim as a sacrifice to God. The spreading of the hands of the priest over the oblation is to acknowledge that all human satisfaction is insufficient to appease the injured justice of God, and to express the desire that the Almighty would deign to accept the sacred flesh and blood of his Incarnate Son as a sacrifice and ransom for the sins of the world. Hence the priest prays : “ We therefore beseech thee, O Lord ! graciously to accept this oblation of our service, as also of thy whole family, and to dispose our days in thy peace ; preserve us from eternal damnation, and number us in the flock of thine elect. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

Simon—Why is the sanctuary-bell rung at this point ?

Pastor—This is not the only time when the little bell is rung. This is done at the “ Sanctus,” to give notice of the beginning of the Canon ; then when the priest spreads his hands over the chalice, to give notice that the awful and mysterious moment of the Consecration is at hand ; again during the elevation, to invite the people to make an act of adoration ; and finally before the Communion of the priest, that those who wish to receive Holy Communion may prepare to approach the altar. The primitive Christians received Holy Communion from the hands of the priest every time they assisted at Mass.—The priest now joins his hands, and continues to pray : “ Which oblation do thou, O God ! vouchsafe in all respects to make ✠ blessed, ✠ approved, ✠ ratified, reasonable and acceptable, that it may become to us the ✠ body and ✠ blood of thy most beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” While reciting this prayer the celebrant makes five crosses over the oblation. Following the example of the Saviour, he takes the bread in his hands, and, lifting his eyes to heaven, blesses it, reciting the following prayer : “ Who (namely, Jesus Christ), the day before he suffered, took bread into his holy and venerable hands, and with eyes uplifted to heaven to thee, O God ! his Father Almighty, giving

thanks to thee, he blessed, broke, and gave to his disciples, saying: 'Take and eat ye all of this: FOR THIS IS MY BODY.' After this consecration of the bread, the priest takes up the chalice, and thus continues: "In like manner after he had supped, taking also this holy chalice into his sacred and venerable hands, and giving thee thanks, he blessed, and gave to his disciples, saying: 'TAKE AND DRINK YE ALL OF THIS, FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL TESTAMENT; THE MYSTERY OF FAITH; WHICH SHALL BE SHED FOR YOU, AND FOR MANY, UNTO THE REMISSION OF SINS.' As often as ye shall do these things, ye shall do them in remembrance of me."

Simon—Here the priest elevates the sacred Host and the chalice containing the precious blood.

Pastor—Yes; having first knelt down and adored the Saviour present upon the altar, he also invites the congregation to show homage and adoration to the Blessed Redeemer. The custom of elevating the Host and chalice immediately after the Consecration was not introduced until after the heresy of Berengarius, an archdeacon of Angers, in France, who, about the middle of the eleventh century, began to raise doubts as to the Real Presence. Then this custom was introduced as a testimony and protest against his errors. Originally the elevation took place at the conclusion of the Canon, where even now the priest lifts the chalice from the altar, but does not show it to the people. This is called the "minor elevation."

After the elevation of the chalice the celebrant continues: "Wherefore (obedient to the command to offer this Holy Sacrifice in commemoration of Christ), O Lord! we thy servants, as also thy people, calling to mind the blessed Passion of the same Christ, thy Son, our Lord, his resurrection and glorious ascension into heaven, offer unto thy most excellent Majesty, of thy gifts and grants, a pure Host, a holy Host, an immaculate Host, the holy bread of eternal life, and the

chalice of everlasting salvation. Upon which vouchsafe to look, with a propitious and serene countenance, and to accept them, as thou wast graciously pleased to accept the gifts of thy just Abel, and the sacrifice of our patriarch Abraham, and that which the high-priest Melchisedech offered to thee, a holy sacrifice, an immaculate Host. We most humbly beseech thee, Almighty God, command these oblations to be carried by the hands of thy angel to thy altar on high, in the sight of thy Divine Majesty, that as many of us as, by participation at this altar, shall receive the most sacred body and blood of thy Son, may be filled with all heavenly benediction and grace. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen." This prayer is followed by the *Memento*, or intercession for the departed. The following is the translation : "Be mindful, O Lord ! of thy servants and handmaids N. and N., who are gone before us with the sign of faith, and repose in the sleep of peace. To these, O Lord ! and to all that rest in Christ, grant, we beseech thee, a place of refreshment, light, and peace. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen." Originally, at this part of the Mass, it was customary to publish the names of the dead who were to be prayed for. This reading of the names served at the same time as a declaration that those named had departed this life in peace with the Church, and in communion with the faithful ; hence the names of heretics and of those excommunicated were not permitted to be entered in these lists. And even to-day, whilst we may pray outside of the Mass for those who have died not in communion with the Church, the holy sacrifice of the Mass cannot be offered for them, nor their names mentioned at Mass.—The priest now prays again for the living who are present : "And to us sinners, thy servants, hoping in the multitude of thy mercies, vouchsafe to grant some part and fellowship with thy holy apostles and martyrs ; with John, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicitas, Per-

petua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecilia, Anastasia, and with all thy saints ; into whose company we beseech thee to admit us, not as a rewarder of merit, but as a free bestower of pardon. Through Christ our Lord, by whom, O Lord ! thou dost always create, sanctify, quicken, bless, and give us all these good things. Through him, and with him, and in him, is to thee, God the Father Almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” During the latter part of this prayer the celebrant makes the sign of the cross three times over the mouth of the chalice with the Host. He then raises the Host and chalice together, for the second (or minor) elevation, but not so high as in the former case. The concluding words of the foregoing prayer are chanted or recited in an elevated tone, to give notice that the Canon has terminated. After this follows the preparation for—

COMMUNION.—Before beginning it the priest first recites aloud the “Pater Noster,” or the “Lord’s Prayer,” of which the last petition, “But deliver us from evil. Amen,” is sung by the choir, or repeated by the servers at the altar. These words give occasion to add another short prayer : “Deliver us, O Lord !”—the priest continues—“we beseech thee, from all evils, past and present and future, and by the intercession of the blessed and glorious ever Virgin Mary, Mother of God, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and Andrew, and all the saints, grant peace in our days, that, through the assistance of thy mercy, we may be always free from sin, and secure from all disturbances. Through the same Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord.”

Here the Pastor made a pause, to afford his hearers a little relaxation, so that they might be able to follow the further explanations with proper attention. This pause was employed by some to ask additional explanation upon some points they had not fully understood. One of the audience wished to know why in Solemn High Mass the subdeacon, with

veil upon his shoulders, takes the paten from the altar at the Offertory, and, standing at the altar-steps. holds it until the end of the "Pater Noster," when he brings it back to the celebrant.

Pastor—The original usage was to consecrate the bread upon the paten, which, as it served to contain what was necessary for the Communion both of the priest and the faithful, was very large. About the seventh century the custom was introduced of consecrating on the corporal, and then the paten was removed from the altar after the Offertory, and held, enveloped in a scarf or veil, by one of the attendants, until it was required, after the Lord's Prayer, for the purpose of breaking the Host upon it. For some centuries it was given to an acolyte, who, not being in Holy Orders, was not permitted to touch the sacred vessels, but held it enveloped. Subsequently the duty was assigned to a subdeacon, who, though in Holy Orders, yet continues to wear the scarf for the purpose of keeping this sacred vessel clean by having it rolled in this veil.

Simon—You have just alluded to the breaking of the Host; why is this done?

Pastor—The breaking of the Host dates from the divine institution of the Mass, and hence the sacrifice itself was known amongst the early Christians as the breaking of bread (Luke xxiv. 35; Acts ii. 46, and xx. 7; 1 Cor. x. 16). This breaking of the bread had originally a natural or practical reason, because the Hosts were then much larger than they are at present, resembling the *mazoth*, or unleavened breads, used by the Jews at the celebration of the Passover. Such a Host the priest divided, in order himself to receive a part in Holy Communion, and to distribute the remainder, broken into many smaller pieces, among the faithful. At present, in the Western or Latin Church, the Host is broken into three parts, one of which is put into the chalice, and the other two parts are consumed by the priest in Com-

munion. Mystic writers explain this breaking of the Host as exhibiting the death of the Saviour upon the cross, when bowing down his head, after having declared that all was consummated, he gave up the ghost. And as the separate consecration or change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ exhibited the lamb as slain, so now the union of the species of bread with the species of wine shows the reunion of his soul with his body after his death.

Thomas—Why is unleavened bread used for the Holy Sacrifice ?

Pastor—Because this was done by the Saviour himself at the Last Supper.

Simon—What follows after the breaking of the Host ?

Pastor—The *Agnus Dei*—a prayer by which the celebrant, accompanied by the faithful, thrice addresses the Saviour in these words : “ Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world ” ; twice he adds the petition, “ Have mercy on us,” and the third time, “ Grant us peace.” At each of these petitions he strikes his breast. The words “ grant us peace ” give occasion to the priest to add a further prayer in the following words : “ Lord Jesus Christ, who didst say to thy apostles, ‘ Peace I leave you, my peace I give unto you,’ regard not my sins, but the faith of thy Church, and grant her that peace and unity which is agreeable to thy will, who livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen.” In Masses for the dead this prayer and the salute of peace are omitted, because at those Masses the attention is occupied with suffrages or prayers for the departed. And in the *Agnus Dei*, instead of “ have mercy on us,” and “ give us peace,” the priest says “ give them rest,” “ grant them eternal rest.” Does not this prayer remind you of a sublime lesson taught by our Divine Saviour during his lifetime ?

Simon—I know not to what lesson you allude.

Pastor—In the fifth chapter of St. Matthew, twenty-third verse, the Saviour says : “ If thou offerest thy gift at the

altar, and there shalt remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy gift, before the altar, and first go to be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." We comply with this injunction of Christ when about, by Holy Communion, to take part in a special manner in his precious sacrifice. After having, let us hope, become reconciled to our neighbor, even before passing the threshold of the temple, we, at this part of the Mass, beg of God to obliterate every trace of discord that may possibly still exist between ourselves and others, and beseech him to preserve the whole of Christendom in peace and unity. In the early Christian assemblies it was customary for both the clergy and the people, after this prayer, to give to each other the kiss of peace, saying, "Peace be with thee," to which the answer was, "And with thy spirit." This custom is still observed at present in Solemn High Mass, where the celebrant first kisses the altar, to receive from Christ that peace which he is about to give to others, and then embraces the deacon, repeating the words, "Peace be to thee." The deacon, having given the response, descends and gives the salutation of peace to the subdeacon, and, if any of the clergy be present, to the first of each rank, and by these first persons it is communicated to their brethren.

Thomas—Why has this beautiful custom been abolished among the people?

Pastor—Before the twelfth century there was a separation of the sexes in the Christian assemblies. After this period this separation began to be neglected, and the ancient salute was then discontinued as inconvenient and unbecoming. —The salute of peace is followed by two prayers as an immediate preparation for Communion. Formerly the words and the number of these prayers were left to the piety and devotion of the celebrant, but, to bring about uniformity, he is now restricted to these two. This custom has prevailed since about the thirteenth century. These prayers read as

follows: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who, according to the will of thy Father, hast by thy death, through the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, given life to the world, deliver me by this thy most sacred body and blood from all my iniquities, and from all evils; and make me always adhere to thy commandments, and never suffer me to be separated from thee; who livest and reignest with God the Father, etc." "Let not, O Lord Jesus Christ! the participation of thy body, which I, though unworthy, presume to receive, turn to my judgment and condemnation; but, through thy mercy, may it be to me a safeguard and remedy, both for soul and body; who with God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen." The moment of the Communion having arrived, the priest, thus prepared to receive the precious body and blood of the Lord, takes the sacred Host in his hands, saying: "I will receive this heavenly bread, and I will call upon the name of the Lord." But then recollecting his own unworthiness, he thrice strikes his breast, adding: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; say but the word, and my soul shall be healed." Then, making the sign of the cross with the Blessed Sacrament, he says: "May the body of the Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to eternal life. Amen," and takes Holy Communion. Then meditating for a moment upon the great favor vouchsafed to him by God, he again gives vent to his devout sentiments in these words: "What can I give to the Lord for all that he hath given to me?" Thus he speaks with the royal prophet (Psl. cxv. 12), and now prepares to take also the chalice, continuing to pray: "I will take the chalice of salvation, and I will call upon the name of the Lord. Praising the Lord, I will call upon him, and I shall be saved from my enemies." Then, making the sign of the cross also with the chalice, he says: "May the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to eternal life. Amen."

and, holding the paten under the chalice and his chin, he reverently receives the contents of the sacred vessel. Immediately afterwards, while purifying the chalice, the celebrant pours forth the expressions of his gratitude for the heavenly gifts received, and supplicates divine clemency that he may preserve them in his soul, and may in abundant measure participate in their fruits. "Grant, O Lord!" the priest continues, "that what we have taken with our mouth, we may receive with a pure mind, that of a temporal gift it may become to us an eternal remedy. May thy body, O Lord! which I have received, and thy blood, which I have drunk, cleave to my bowels; and grant that no stain of sin may remain in me, who have been fed with this pure and holy sacrament; who livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen." The celebrant now recites at the Epistle side, to which the book has been removed, a verse from one of the Psalms, or a short extract from some other part of the Scripture. Formerly this passage was much longer, and was chanted whilst the faithful approached the altar to receive Holy Communion. It is still called "communion."

Simon—What a sublime spectacle it must have been to behold the entire congregation approach to receive Holy Communion?

Pastor—Indeed, it is greatly to be desired that even in our days we might enjoy this spectacle. And when the Christian people had ceased to present themselves at the banquet of the Lord with the original fervor and assiduity, the Church had recourse to another means to preserve at least a shadow of the ancient fervor and devotion. Besides the bread which is consecrated at Mass, a considerable quantity was only *blessed*, and distributed after service to those who had not received Communion. From the fact that it was given as a sort of substitute for Communion, it used to be called the *Antidoron*—that is, something in lieu of the *Doron*, or gift, the latter being the name generally given to the

Eucharist in the Oriental Church. In some churches of France this practice is still observed. There this bread is called *pain benit*. It served as a token of unity and fellowship of the orthodox faithful.

Simon—What now succeeds the Communion ?

Pastor—The celebrant again salutes the people with the usual salutation, and then chants or says aloud the "*Post-Communion*"—a prayer of thanksgiving for the favor of having received Holy Communion, or having assisted at the august Sacrifice. Once more he addresses to the congregation the words, "The Lord be with you," and then dismisses the people, saying, "*Ite, missa est*"—"Go, the Mass is ended," to which the response is given, "*Deo gratias*"—"Thanks be to God."

Simon—Sometimes the priest says, "*Benedicamus Domino*," instead of "*Ite, missa est*."

Pastor—This means, "Let us praise the Lord," and in ancient times was an invitation to the people not yet to leave the church, but to assist at the prayers after Mass. Such special prayers were said after the service on Sundays during Advent and Lent, and hence it is on these days that this invitation is still addressed to the people at present. In Masses of Requiem this formula of dismissal is not used, but in its stead the priest says : "May they rest in peace." Nor is the blessing given. The people are not dismissed, because they are expected to remain for the "absolution," or the prayers for the dead, recited after Mass. The blessing at the end of Mass was introduced in the tenth century, and the old custom of not blessing at all is still retained in Requiem Masses. It is here omitted because the blessing is principally intended to be applied to the departed.

Simon—Does the Mass really end with the "*Ite, missa est*" ?

Pastor—After the "*Ite, missa est*" the priest says another short prayer in his own behalf, in which he begs that God

would make the sacrifice, that has been offered, useful to him and those for whom it was presented. The faithful still remain ; they stand around the priest, as if they would say, as did formerly the patriarch Jacob to the angel of God: "I shall not leave thee, until thou shalt have blest me." The priest now prepares to satisfy their expectations. He kisses the altar, and, nourished with the sacred flesh of Christ, and filled with his holy grace, he lifts his hands and eyes to the image of the crucified Saviour, turns to the congregation, and makes over them the sign of the cross, saying: "May Almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, bless you. Amen." Then he reads the Gospel of St. John (John i. 1-14), if no other Gospel be assigned for the day. This Gospel contains most appropriate allusions to the celebration just terminated, and to the Communion received by the priest and perhaps by others of the congregation. In this Gospel we read: "In Him was the life. . . . He was the true light which enlighteneth every man. . . . As many as received him, to them he gave power to be made the sons of God. . . . The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory, as it were the glory of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The attendants at the altar respond: "Thanks be to God," and the celebration of the Mass is ended.

Now, my friends, let us terminate also, for I have already detained you too long.

CHAPTER VI.

The Mass—(continued).

PASTOR—Perhaps there are some points upon which you desire an explanation, which the want of time at our last conference would not permit me to give. I am now prepared to answer any questions you may have to ask.

Simon—I would have wished to remark at our last conference that it seems to me that it would tend more to the edification of the people if all the prayers said by the priest at Mass were recited in a loud and audible voice.

Pastor—Whilst much edification might, indeed, be derived from a prayer recited in such a manner that all may follow, yet it cannot be denied that the stillness or silence is apt to fill us with awe, to excite devotion, to help our prayer, and lead us to reflect upon the holy mystery accomplished in the moment of consecration. These ends are better attained by silent prayer than by the most unctuous prayer recited aloud. Hence, it is a laudable practice, observed in many places, to discontinue not only the singing at the Elevation, but also to hush the organ. In this manner an opportunity is given to the faithful of adoring their Saviour present on the altar, not with their lips, but in their inmost soul.

Thomas—Silent prayer at Mass, particularly at the Canon, is, indeed, suited to attain the ends to which you have alluded; and I will readily admit that there is something majestic in an occasional silence during divine worship. But in the end it is wholly immaterial whether the priest prays aloud or silently, as long as he recites the prayers in the Latin language. Why is not at least that recited in the vernacular, which the priest says in a loud or elevated voice? Did

the apostles hold divine service in a dead language, or in a tongue unintelligible to the faithful of their day?

Pastor—I will give you a few of the principal reasons why the Church has retained the Latin language in her liturgy or public worship :

1) The Catholic Church had her origin at a period when the Latin language was generally used throughout the civilized world ; the doctrines of our holy faith were, therefore, not only preached to several nations in this tongue, but in this they were also recorded. Some of the most ancient liturgies were compiled in Latin. And as it is now a dead and unchanging language, we have the greatest possible certainty that our belief corresponds with that of the earliest preachers of the Gospel ; for, using their own language, we are also in possession of their thoughts and ideas. Living tongues are constantly changing in words and in their meanings.

2) The Church has retained the use of the Latin tongue in her liturgy as an expression of the unity and harmony of all Catholic peoples in the matter of religion. Though scattered through so many various nations, from one pole to the other, Catholics constitute the one great family of God upon earth. They have not only the same faith, the same sacraments, the same ecclesiastical government, but also the same sacrifice ; and it is, therefore, also exceedingly proper that they should have one common language of religion, so that, however separated by rivers, by mountains, by seas, by climates, by customs, or forms of government, they might find themselves united by this great bond of Communion at the holy altar, in the house of their common Father. How beautifully the unity and fraternity of all the faithful of the Church is made manifest, when at home or abroad, in our own country or in a strange land, we enter a Catholic temple, and there find the same rites at the Holy Sacrifice, and hear the priest at the altar use the common language of

the common faith ! Everywhere we find ourselves at home, and the sameness of language, and the sameness of the ceremonial makes us feel that we are not strangers, but members of the one household. How different, on the other hand, would be our feelings if, in crossing the confines of our native country, we were to find, wherever another tongue is spoken, the priest at the altar using another language ! The advantage which the vernacular might possibly have for us at home would be again utterly lost, if everywhere outside of our own country we were to encounter in the sanctuary a strange, and to us a dead, language !

3) A common language not only represents the unity of faith, but also greatly tends to *preserve* the oneness and unity of faith. By it each prelate is the judge and the witness of the unchanged doctrine of his fellow-prelates. National languages naturally pave the way to national churches. But a Church that is universal and unchanging must also have a universal and unchanging language.

4) The bishops and the clergy must necessarily be in frequent communication with the common centre—the Holy See. This requires that they should have a common language in which to conduct their correspondence, otherwise the Pope would be compelled to employ secretaries speaking every language in Christendom.

5) From time to time it may become necessary for the Sovereign Pontiff to gather around him, in general council, the bishops of the Church. Now, if these bishops, coming from every quarter of the globe, had no common, uniform language, intelligible to all, the holding of these councils would be absolutely impossible ; for they would have no medium through which to exchange their views and thoughts on the matters presented to their consideration. But by means of the Latin language they can all make themselves understood as plainly as if each spoke in his native tongue.

Thomas—I cannot but acknowledge the weight of these

reasons ; nevertheless, it always remains true that the people of a given country would derive greater profit from the Mass and the administration of the sacraments, if they could hear and understand the prayers of the priest in their own language.

Pastor—Pray, tell me wherein this greater profit consists ? Are the prayers of the priest to serve the people as an instruction ? The Mass and the sacraments on the one hand, and a sermon or instruction on the other, are two very different things. The Mass is a solemn act of religion, having for its express object the honor and adoration of God, and not the instruction of the people ; the sacraments have been instituted to cleanse us from sins, or enrich us with divine grace. The sermon, on the other hand, has for its object to make us acquainted with the truths of our holy religion, and to animate us to a truly Christian life. If, by chance, the faithful should sustain any loss from the use of the Latin language by the Church in her liturgy, this loss can be amply compensated for by sermons, instructions, and good books. It is by no means the wish or intention of the Church that the people should remain uninformed concerning the context of the prayers used at Mass, and in the administration of the sacraments. She has, on the contrary, made the proper instruction of the people, in all things pertaining to our holy religion, a stringent duty for her pastors entrusted with the care of souls. And in the series of instructions I have now for some time been giving you in these conferences, I have only complied with this obligation imposed upon me by the Church. For those in earnest, and of good will, there is ample opportunity to gain every information on these matters, in the various books treating of these subjects. Moreover, there are many good prayer-books that contain the prayers said by the priest at Mass, if not literally, at least according to their sense. He that profits by the manifold opportunities afforded for instruc-

tion, can thus learn the contents of the prayers of the Church better, and more easily, than if he sought to learn them in the church. For in large churches the priest, particularly if his voice be not very strong, could scarcely make himself heard and understood by all from the altar.

Simon—I would like to ask one or two more questions concerning some of the usages peculiar to Solemn High Masses. What is the meaning of the repeated incensing of the altar ?

Pastor—After having finished the prayers at the foot of the altar, the priest incenses the crucifix, and the relics of saints, if any there be upon the altar, as a sign of respect. Then he swings the censer over the altar, on either side of the tabernacle, towards the candlesticks ; these are a symbol of the apostles, who were sent by Christ into the world, in order to carry to all men the light of the Gospel. He next incenses the altar, as an emblem of the prayers which are now to be directed to God by the priest and the assembled faithful. Finally, the priest is himself incensed by the deacon, both as a mark of respect and an admonition to let his prayers ascend to God, as the incense rises towards heaven. I have already explained to you the meaning of incensing the Gospel-book. Incense is used again at the Offertory, immediately before the washing of the hands by the priest. The celebrant first incenses the offerings of bread and wine, to express the desire that these, in union with the prayers of the faithful, might become an acceptable sacrifice before God. Then the crucifix, the relics, the altar, and the celebrant are again incensed with the same symbolical meaning as at the Introit. The attending ministers at the altar, and the clergy that may be present in the sanctuary, are also incensed, to call upon them to assist at the Holy Sacrifice with due recollection and devotion. It is customary in many churches also to incense the people, in order thus to extend likewise to them the invitation to recollection and devotion. When

putting incense into the thurible the celebrant blesses it, saying: "May the Lord, by the intercession of blessed Michael the archangel, standing at the right hand of the Altar of Incense, and of all his elect, vouchsafe to bless this incense, and receive it as an odor of sweetness; through Christ our Lord." Whilst incensing the offerings he prays: "May this incense, which thou hast blessed, O Lord! ascend to thee, and may thy mercy descend upon us." Then incensing the altar, he continues the 140th Psalm: "Let my prayer, O Lord! be directed as incense in thy sight; the lifting up of my hands as evening sacrifice. Set a watch, O Lord! before my mouth, and a door about my lips. Incline not my lips to evil words, to make excuses in sin." Returning the censer to the deacon, he says: "May the Lord enkindle in us the fire of his love, and the flame of everlasting charity."—At the Elevation incense is likewise used, but here it expresses the adoration of all the faithful towards the Blessed Sacrament. This is the symbolical signification of the incense whenever used in connection with the Holy Eucharist.

Thomas—Is the incense with which the crucifix, the relics, and the altar are incensed a sign of adoration?

Pastor—Only when used, as I have just said, to incense the Blessed Sacrament. At all other times it is a token of respect. Besides this, it is also emblematically instructive; it teaches us, as I told you on a previous occasion, how our prayers should ascend to the throne of mercy, with acceptable fragrance to the Most High. The incensing of the altar, as well as that of the crucifix, is a token of respect shown, not to the stone of which the altar is made, but to Christ, whom it represents. Christ is the foundation and corner-stone, set by the Heavenly Father to unite Jews and gentiles in the one Church and the one faith. If we incense the relics of the saints, we represent the latter to ourselves as members of Christ, according to the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor. vi. 15): "Know you not that your bodies

are the members of Christ?"—that is, the members of that mystic body of which Christ is the head. And, writing to the Ephesians (v. 30), the same apostle says: "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Hence, while the incensing of the relics is a token of respect to the saints, this mark of reverence is again referred to Christ, as the head of the saints. And, finally, the incensing of the priest and clergy, and the faithful, is likewise a sign of respect shown to these living members of the Church and of Christ. To the latter this ceremony is especially to serve as an exhortation and admonition to prayer.

Thomas—I remember once to have read that the early Christians employed incense during divine worship only because its use was rendered necessary by the damp and unwholesome air of the underground places in which they assembled during the prevalence of persecution, but that now, when we have public and spacious temples, there is no longer any need of incense.

Pastor—This assertion has not even the shadow of foundation. In the Old Law it was prescribed by God himself, and for the purpose of his worship. Incense was also among the gifts offered by the Wise Men to the Saviour in Bethlehem; and we have the best testimony of its use in the Christian worship at a very early period.

Simon—I have now nothing further to ask concerning the ceremonies of High Mass, but I would like to know whether a Mass, at which the celebrant does not wear a black vestment, may also be said for the dead?

Pastor—Certainly; and, indeed, this is generally the case. For Requiem Masses (except High Masses) can only be said on days on which there is no feast of double grade. I would here recall to your mind what I told you on a former occasion—namely, that the Mass is never said in such a manner as to exclude either the living or the dead from its benefits. The black color of the vestment is only to indicate that the

special fruits of the Mass are to be particularly applied, by way of suffrage, to the souls of the departed.

Thomas—I have often heard it severely censured that the priests receive pay for offering the Mass according to a special intention.

Pastor—This censure would indeed be richly deserved if what you say were true. Every priest, and every well-instructed Catholic, knows that the sacrifice of the Mass can neither be bought nor sold, and hence cannot be paid for in money. The holy sacrifice of the Mass is a spiritual gift infinitely above all earthly value. And as the power of offering this sacrifice was conferred *without price* upon the priest by the Redeemer, for the benefit of all the faithful, he must also give *without price* what he received. The so-called stipend or offering made to the priest when asked to say Mass for a particular intention is no stipulated pay or remuneration for the Holy Sacrifice. It is nothing more than a vestige of the ancient Christian custom of making an offering during Mass of bread and wine, and oil, and other things. Only so much of these offerings as was necessary for the Holy Sacrifice was placed upon the altar, and what was over and above went into a common fund for the sustenance of the clergy and the poor of the parish. In presenting these gifts the people usually gave in the names of those whom they desired to be specially remembered at Mass. In the course of time the custom of making these offerings in kind gave way to the practice of the present day—namely, of offering a substitute in money. It is but an alms given for the becoming maintenance of the priest; for, as he serves the altar, he should also live by the altar. St. Paul (1 Cor. ix. 11) says: “If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we reap your carnal things? . . . Know you not that they who work in the holy place eat the things that are of the holy place; and they who serve the altar partake with the altar? So also the Lord ordained

that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." So also have the offerings made on the occasion of baptisms and marriages no other object than to afford the clergy a suitable support, and to give them the means to respond to the many appeals for charity constantly made to them. —This explanation, Thomas, will enable you to refute this odious charge, made, among others, against the Catholic priest.

Let us terminate our conference for this evening. At our next meeting we shall speak of the fourth sacrament—namely, *Penance*.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Sacrament of Penance.

PASTOR—This evening let us take up the Sacrament of Penance, in connection with which, however, there are comparatively few external rites or usages.

Simon—What prayer does the priest recite when the penitent presents himself in the confessional?

Pastor—He blesses the penitent, and begs God to give him the grace of rightly confessing his sins, saying: "The Lord be in thy heart and on thy lips, that thou mayest truly and humbly confess all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Simon—Why is the penitent required to mention the time of his last confession?

Pastor—That the confessor may be able, 1) to discover the amendment of the penitent since his last confession; 2) that the penitent may be admonished to greater solicitude for his salvation, in case he has waited too long with his confession—in a word, that the true state of the penitent's soul may be made manifest.

Thomas—Is it really necessary to confess all of one's sins singly? Is not the priest himself a sinner?

Pastor—It is necessary to do this, just as it is necessary for a sick man to discover to the physician his wounds and ailments if he would be healed of his infirmities. It is true, the priest is himself a sinful man, and, as such, he also stands in need of pardon and grace through the Sacrament of Penance. But when administering this sacrament, he

takes the place of Jesus Christ, who commissioned and empowered him thereto, as he did formerly the apostles, saying: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you . . . Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." In this commission the priests have received the power both of forgiving and of retaining sins. I need scarcely observe that the priest cannot make use of this power according to his own caprice, but must exercise it according to the merits of the penitent. But he can only form a rational judgment whether in a given instance the sins are to be forgiven or retained, after having had an accurate insight into the several sins or transgressions of the penitent. Neither is there any ground for being ashamed of such a detailed confession. The Wise Man (Ecclus. iv. 24) says: "For thy life (for the good of thy soul) be not ashamed to say the truth: for there is a shame that bringeth sin; and there is a shame that bringeth glory and grace."

Thomas—I can very well understand how in the case of grievous sins this accusation in detail may be necessary. But it seems to me that, if the penitent were to accuse himself in general terms, say in the following manner: "Mortal sins I have none, and for my venial sins I am heartily sorry," this ought to answer every purpose.

Pastor—Just as it would answer the purpose of the physician if you were to complain of being sick by saying to him: "I am not seriously ill, but I have aches and pains in different parts of my body." In the first place, who is to be the judge whether the sins, which you regard as venial or light, do not really deserve to be called grievous? Pious persons, or those of a delicate conscience, are apt to reproach themselves bitterly for slight faults, and imagine that they have been guilty of grave offences; while persons given to a vicious life excuse and palliate very serious transgressions, and represent them as of but little import. Hence, if the

confessor were to rely upon a general accusation of the penitents, he would be apt to deal rigorously with those who least deserve it, and treat mildly those who, for the good of their souls, greatly need a more earnest and careful treatment. Even in bodily ailments we have often the same experience. We frequently meet persons who are seriously and dangerously sick, but who will not admit it to themselves; while others who are troubled with a light and passing ailment imagine their life to be in imminent danger.—And granted even the penitent, making such a general accusation, were not to deceive himself in regard to the state of his soul, and that he really has no grievous sins, even then he presumably comes to the tribunal of penance for the purpose of amending his minor faults, and of being more watchful against them in the future. If he has not this purpose, why resort to the Sacrament of Penance? But if this really be his purpose it must then be a matter of concern to him that the confessor be properly informed as to his several sins, so that he may give him suitable admonition and advice, and furnish him with the proper means for his amendment.

Simon—I once heard that there are sins which not every priest can forgive.

Pastor—This is really so, and in the language of the Church such sins are called *reserved cases*. They are certain grievous sins, generally against the fifth and sixth commandments; the pardon of these sins the Pope, or the bishop in his diocese, has reserved to himself, so that a priest cannot absolve from them without first obtaining special faculties or powers from his ecclesiastical superiors. The object of this reservation is to instil into the hearts of men a great dread and profound detestation of such enormous transgressions. By means of it the thoughtless sinner, who, without shame or fear, commits the most heinous crimes, trusting to receive unconditional pardon for them from the priest, is checked in

his presumption, and is deprived of his delusive consolation. The eyes of the sinner are opened, and he begins to understand the heinousness of his vices and crimes, if, after considerable inconvenience, hardship, and pain, he must seek for the grace of the sacrament, not from the ordinary priest, but at the feet of his chief pastor, the bishop. After this he will be more solicitous and watchful not to relapse into his former grievous and disgraceful sins, knowing that he can obtain pardon for them only at the cost of so much inconvenience and hardship.

Simon—In what manner is absolution given?

Pastor—The priest first prays for the sinner, saying: "May Almighty God have mercy on thee, and forgive thee thy sins, and bring thee to life everlasting. Amen." Then, stretching forth his right hand towards the penitent, he says: "May the almighty and merciful Lord grant thee pardon, absolution, and remission of thy sins. Amen." Then he continues: "Our Lord Jesus Christ absolve thee; and I, by his authority, absolve thee, in the first place, from every bond of excommunication or interdict, as far as I have power and thou standeth in need; in the next place, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." In conclusion he directs to God a prayer in behalf of the penitent in the following words: "May the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of all the saints, and whatsoever good thou shalt do, or whatsoever evil thou shalt suffer, be to thee unto the remission of thy sins, the increase of grace, and the recompense of everlasting life. Amen." As a pledge of his reconciliation with God, he now bids him "Go in peace."

Simon—What is the object of the penance imposed upon the penitent by the confessor?

Pastor—1) To afford the penitent the opportunity of paying the debt of temporal punishment due to his sins; 2) to

give him an opportunity of shewing, by the performance of the penance imposed, that his conversion is really sincere, and how much he desires to undo the past; 3) to impress him with the gravity of his offences, and, by the penitential works imposed, to effect his amendment. By these penitential works, as you know, we render satisfaction to the offended justice of God. Hence they are simply called "satisfaction."

Thomas—Why, did not Christ redeem us all, and render the most perfect satisfaction for us all? What value can such human satisfaction have by the side of the satisfaction of Christ?

Pastor—Certainly, Christ has rendered satisfaction for all of us, and without his satisfaction no good work of ours, no penitential act, nor indeed anything else, would have any value whatever in the eyes of God. But since Christ accomplished our redemption, and rendered satisfaction for us, it is our task to appropriate to ourselves the riches and merits of his redeeming death, and we need no longer fear that our good works are valueless in the sight of God. They do not, however, derive their merit from us, but from Christ, for whose sake the Heavenly Father is pleased to accept them. If penitential works were unnecessary and useless, we would be unable to explain why, in the early times of Christianity, the penitential discipline was so severe. In those days even public penance was enjoined and performed for certain offences. I need scarcely remind you that it is only through the grace of the Sacrament of Penance that we are freed from the guilt of sin, and the eternal punishment due to mortal sin. By the performance of the good works imposed upon us in the Sacrament of Penance, we are cleansed only of minor faults and imperfections, and only the temporal punishment, remaining after the guilt has been removed, is remitted.

Simon—You just alluded to public penances imposed in the early Church. Of what kind were these penances?

Pastor—It is, indeed, worth while to speak of them more explicitly; from the penitential discipline of the early Church we may learn most salutary lessons, and draw from it important conclusions. If we see how rigorously the Church dealt with penitent sinners in the first centuries, how contrite penitents, standing at the church-doors clothed in sack-cloth, submitted to public humiliations, how for seven, ten, and sometimes twenty years they were excluded from the eucharistic banquet, and how with tears and sobs they were compelled, dearly enough, to purchase their reconciliation with the Church, then we may judge what little cause we have at present to complain of the hardships of the Sacrament of Penance. How insignificant, compared with the rigors of the early penitential discipline, is the humiliation submitted to by the sinner in private, before a fellow-being—a priest bound to the strictest secrecy! How gentle and mild is the treatment he receives at the hands of the confessor in our day, when contrasted with the severity to which he was subjected in the early days of the Church! In those times public penances were chiefly imposed for three grievous transgressions: 1) apotasy, or defection from the faith; this included even the semblance of denial of the Christian religion; 2) homicide, even if it occurred in momentary excitement, without premeditation; 3) adultery and other gross sins of the flesh.

Simon—Why were these sins especially punished by public penance?

Pastor—Because they are particularly opposed to faith, and the spirit and holiness of Christianity. Denial of the faith is an insult and outrage to the Christian religion; homicide is opposed to the true spirit of Christianity, which is a spirit of charity and meekness; and impurity dishonors the sublime dignity and holiness of the follower of Christ, and destroys in him the living temple of the Holy Ghost. The words of the apostle (Eph. v. 3-6) were deeply impressed in

the minds of the Christians: "All uncleanness, . . . let it not so much as be named among you, as it becometh saints."—In mentioning these three particular vices, I had reference only to the very earliest days of the Church. Subsequently other grievous sins were included in this category, such as perjury, theft, cheating, falsifying of documents, counterfeiting seals, etc.

Simon—In what did these public penances, properly speaking, consist?

Pastor—The public penitents were divided into four classes, through each of which the penitents had to pass before they could be reconciled to the Church, or admitted to Holy Communion. The first class were called the *weepers*. As soon as any one had the misfortune of falling into one of the sins mentioned before, he was denied permission to assist at divine worship with the rest of the faithful. Like a decayed member he was cut off from the body, and excluded from the Church. If, after recognizing their faults, these unfortunates desired to be reunited to the communion of the faithful, whom they had scandalized and disgraced by their offences, they were obliged for a time to stand outside of the church-door, clothed in coarse garments, and with ashes strewn upon their heads. They would cast themselves at the feet of the people going to church, and with tears ask forgiveness for the scandal they had caused, and implor the favor of being admitted to public penance. This trial would frequently last for several years. Throughout the whole of divine service, which often lasted for hours, they had no other shelter against the cold and inclement weather than the vestibule of the church. Sometimes even this protection was denied them, and they were obliged to stand in the open air. When they had undergone a period of probation suited to their offences, they were admitted to the second class of penitents.

The penitents of the second class were called the *hearers*. These were allowed to enter the second porch of the church,

called the *narthex*, to which the pagans and Jews, who were about to learn the first rudiments of Christianity, were likewise admitted. But they were permitted to remain here only during the Mass of the Catechumens, at the end of which they were dismissed by the deacon, together with the non-Christians. To be compelled to stand among the Jews and pagans, to hear the instruction, was to them a great humiliation and severe punishment. It was as if they had been told that they must begin anew to learn the Christian doctrine and the rudiments of religion, because, judging from their mode of life, they had wholly forgotten its teachings, or had never known them. Therefore they were not even looked upon as penitents, in the proper sense, though they were admitted to the second class. They never received, like the rest of the penitents, the imposition of hands from the bishop; nor were they publicly prayed for during divine service. Neither were any special works of penance imposed upon them; these were left to their own choice and fervor. They were not yet deemed worthy of the name of penitents; they had first to become Christians again, before they could be called Christian penitents.

The third class into which the penitents passed, after having undergone the probation of the preceding class, were called the *prostrates*, or *prostrate penitents*. These were allowed to enter into the church proper, and take their place near the *ambo*, or pulpit, among those who were soon to be baptized. But with these they were likewise compelled to leave the church before the beginning of the Offertory. Before leaving, however, a number of long prayers were offered for them by the bishop, the clergy, and the faithful; during these prayers they lay prostrate, in profound humility, upon the floor, and hence their name. Besides this, works of the severest penance were imposed upon them, such as fasting, watching, alms-giving, prayer, wearing of hair-shirts, abstinence from banquets and weddings—in a word, they were

obliged to lead a retired life of self-denial and mortification. During this period of penance they were required to be present at every divine service and at all devotions, with the exception of Mass from the Offertory to the end of Mass. This sad and painful life lasted for a considerable time, generally for several years. But of all of these hard and austere practices there was, perhaps, nothing so painful to them as being debarred from the banquet of the Lord, and being excluded from the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

Finally they entered the fourth class, which was known as that of the *co-standers*. Though separated from the faithful, they were permitted to stand near the sanctuary, and to assist at the whole of the Mass, like the rest of the faithful. But the privilege was denied them of taking part in the Offertory, or presenting offerings, and of receiving Communion, until they had passed the time prescribed for this class, or until the bishop, for weighty reasons, remitted the remainder of their penance, in order somewhat sooner to restore them to full communion with the Church.

Simon—How did the reunion or reconciliation of the penitents with the Church take place?

Pastor—If one of these penitents happened to fall seriously ill, one of the priests would, in the name of the bishop, give him absolution, as a matter of precaution; but if he recovered, he was required to fulfil the remaining penance. This same indulgence was also granted on the outbreak of a new persecution, in order to comfort and strengthen those who would probably be called upon to shed their blood for Christ. Upon this point St. Cyprian (A. D. 258) says: "How shall they be able to die for Christ, if we deny them the blood of Christ? How shall we fit them for drinking the cup of martyrdom, if we do not first admit them to the cup of the Lord?" The public and solemn reconciliation of the penitents generally took place on Holy Thursday, but in some places on Good Friday and Holy Saturday. From this cir-

cumstance originated the custom, long in use, of opening the prisons on Holy Thursday, and liberating those prisoners who had not been deprived of their liberty for very serious crimes. In very early times three Masses were said on Holy Thursday; the first for the reconciliation of the penitents, the second for the blessing of the holy oils, and the third in honor and commemoration of the institution of the Most Holy Eucharist. In subsequent times only one Mass was said on this day, as is the custom at present; but at the Offertory of the Mass on this day there are still sung the words of the Psalmist, which so admirably express the sentiments of the reconciled penitent: "The right hand of the Lord hath wrought strength: the right hand of the Lord hath exalted me. . . . I shall not die, but shall live: and shall declare the works of the Lord" (Psl. cxvii. 16, 17). During the Mass of reconciliation alluded to, the bishop, after having, at the end of the Gospel, prostrated himself at the altar, ascended the pulpit and made an address to the clergy, to the people, and to the penitents. The latter, called upon by the bishop, lifted up their right hands, and solemnly declared that they had really been in earnest in the performance of their penance, and that in future they would prove themselves as truly converted. After this the bishop exhorted them to remain steadfast in their good resolves, and then, returning to the altar, again prostrated himself upon the ground, and with him all who were present in the church. In this position he recited the seven penitential psalms, and then rose to impart to the penitents, still stretched upon the floor, the long-coveted absolution.

Now let me tell you when and how the public penances began for the several penitents. On the first day of Lent—namely, Ash Wednesday—all the pastors of the diocese brought those of their parishioners who were to perform public penance to the cathedral, or bishop's church, and imposed upon each

the penance due him, according to the penitential code or canons. The penitents would remain at the church-door, dressed in penitential robes, with bare heads and bare feet, and in silence and humility await the arrival of the bishop and clergy, who were to introduce them into the church. When they had entered the church, the whole congregation fell upon their knees, and recited the seven penitential psalms for the sinners; then the bishop arose, sprinkled the new penitents with holy water, strewed ashes upon their heads, admonished them in an earnest address to perform faithfully and contritely the penance enjoined, and again led them forth from the church, saying: "On account of your sins you must now be expelled from the church, as Adam was driven by God from Paradise on account of his disobedience." What a touching spectacle it must have been to see the bishop, himself weeping like a tender and loving father, accompanied by his clergy, leading beyond the doors of the church these penitents, robed in sackcloth, bareheaded and barefooted, with tears streaming from their eyes, while the choir in the meanwhile sang the words: "In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat thy bread" (Gen. iii. 19), in order thus the more vividly to recall the expulsion of Adam from the Garden of Eden!

Thomas—Were persons of rank and dignity compelled to submit to these degrading punishments, or were only those of the lower classes held to the performance of these penances?

Pastor—In this matter neither rank, nor station, nor dignity of person was of any avail. The Emperor Theodosius (in 390) had, in a transport of passion, ordered an indiscriminate massacre of the people in Thessalonica, because of a tumult in which some of the imperial officers were stoned to death. In executing the orders of the emperor seven thousand men were cruelly butchered. When soon afterwards Theodosius attempted to enter the church in Milan,

the bishop, St. Ambrose, met him at the porch of the church, and, forbidding him to advance any further, said: "It seems you do not yet rightly understand the enormity of the massacre lately committed. Let not the splendor of your purple robes conceal from you the infirmities of that body which they cover. With what feet will you tread the Lord's temple? How will you lift up to him in prayer those hands which are still reeking with blood unjustly spilled? Depart, therefore, and attempt not by a second offence to aggravate your former crime, but quietly take the yoke upon you which the Lord has appointed for you. It is sharp, but medicinal, and conducive to your health." The emperor offered something by way of excuse, and said that David had sinned. The holy bishop replied: "Him whom you have followed in sinning, follow also in his repentance." Theodosius submitted, and, accepting the penance which the Church prescribed, placed himself among the public penitents. So, likewise, the Emperor Louis, and Edgar, King of England, were compelled to do public penance. Only priests and deacons were not admitted among the penitents. If any of these made themselves guilty of an offence punishable with public penance, they were at once removed from their office, expelled from the ranks of the clergy, and sent into some monastery, there to undergo a period of the most rigorous penance. They were never again permitted to perform the functions of the priesthood. Neither was any one ordained for the priesthood who had ever been subjected to the discipline of public penance. It was thought that such a blot or stain desecrated the sacred dignity of the sanctuary.

Simon—Was a public penance likewise imposed for secret sins?

Pastor—No public penance was enjoined for secret sins—that is, for sins that were not known to others. But it very frequently happened that the Christians would take upon themselves public penances, even where they were not held

to it by the penitential canons, or required to do so by the bishop.

Simon—When were the public penances abolished?

Pastor—This question leads us to a subject, the consideration of which I would rather defer for our next conference, because we have not time enough for its proper treatment this evening. I mean *Indulgences*. Reserve your question, therefore, till our next meeting, and it shall be the first which I will then answer.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of Indulgences and the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

PASTOR—At our last meeting you desired to know when the public penances were abolished. This was done about the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The immediate occasion of their abolition were the well-known Crusades. About that time the Christian princes resolved to regain possession of the Holy Land, and to liberate the poor Christians from the yoke of the Saracens. Pope Urban II., in the Council of Clermont, urged all the Christians of Europe to share in this holy undertaking, either by supporting the movement by contributions in money, or by themselves taking up arms in defence of religion, and joining the Crusades. The manifold hardships which they would have to endure in this holy war were to count them in lieu of the performance of the ecclesiastical penances which were imposed on them for their sins. In like manner were the alms and contributions of those who, on account of age, sex, or physical weakness, could not take up arms, regarded as equivalent to enduring the temporal punishments or penances enjoined. This was the end of the ancient ecclesiastical penances, and the more general granting of indulgences. By virtue of the power vested in the Church, of binding and loosing in heaven and on earth, she changed the former works of penance into these services, which were, both for the Church and the people of those times, of the greatest importance. If the Christians of those days had not opposed, with so much might, the incursions of the infidel Turks, the latter would, perhaps, have enslaved the whole of

Europe, and would have wiped out Christianity as effectually in all European countries as they did in the East, once the scene of the most glorious Christian triumphs.

Thomas—Then it is true that indulgences had their beginning as late as the twelfth century?

Pastor—According to their present form, yes; but not according to their essence. In themselves they are as old as the Church itself. Before going further, it would, perhaps, be well to explain a little more at length what we understand by indulgences, for there is not a single doctrine of our holy faith more misunderstood by non-Catholics, and, frequently on purpose, more grossly misrepresented, than the doctrine of indulgences. The generality of those outside of the Catholic Church imagine that an indulgence is a license to commit sin, or, at least, a pardon for sins to be committed in future. I need hardly tell you that it is nothing of the kind. An indulgence is simply a release from, or remission of, the temporal punishment due on account of sin, after the guilt or eternal punishment has been remitted. That you may fully understand this, I will be a little more explicit. You will remember, from your catechism, that in sin there are two things—namely, the guilt of the sin, and the debt of punishment due to God on account of sin. Now, upon a sinner's repentance and confession, the sin is remitted as to the guilt, and likewise as to the eternal punishment in hell, due to every mortal sin; but the conversion or contrition is seldom so perfect as to release the sinner from all debt of temporal punishment due to the Justice of God.

Thomas—But it is really true that after the guilt of the sin, and its eternal punishment, has been remitted, there still remains a temporal punishment due to God's justice?

Pastor—I might cite for you a number of passages from Sacred Scripture to prove the correctness of this doctrine, but I will content myself with the instance recorded of King David. David had grievously sinned, but, admonished by the

prophet Nathan, was truly contrite for his transgression. Therefore the man of God said to the repentant king : "The Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Nevertheless . . . the child that is born to thee shall surely die" (2 Kings xii. 13). But without recurring to the Scriptures, we find an example nearer home. In the Sacrament of Baptism we have all received a complete pardon of original sin, and still we daily sigh under the yoke of innumerable punishments consequent upon the transgression of our first parents. These temporal punishments remain in order that we may make some compensation to divine justice. Thus even temporal princes, in view of certain circumstances, often remit the punishment of death which the homicide has merited for his crime, and which the law has pronounced against him; but, that the demands of justice may not be disregarded, the death penalty is commuted into imprisonment for a longer or shorter period.—I said before that indulgences are as old as the Church. In the second epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (ii. 10), we read that the apostle granted an indulgence to the incestuous Corinthian, whom he had condemned to a penance proportioned to his guilt. For when he afterwards learned of his penitent's contrition, he absolved him from the penance he had imposed. After the apostles we find the bishops of the Church exercising this same power, and that at a time when the penitential canons were most strictly observed. I have already stated that in cases of dangerous sickness, and when penitents showed special signs of fervor and sorrow, the penances were remitted. But this was also frequently done at the request of those condemned to martyrdom, as may be seen from the letters of St. Cyprian, and the writings of Tertullian and others. That the bishops possessed the discretionary power of mitigating or remitting altogether these temporal punishments, is furthermore apparent from the ordinances of the Church—for instance, from those of the Council of Ancyra (314), of Nice (325).

and of Carthage (398). In doing this the Church never lost from view the debt of punishment due by the sinner to the justice of God. She applied to those whose temporal punishment she had mitigated or remitted, the superabundant satisfaction of Christ and the merits of the saints, which are called the treasure of the Church.

Thomas—Do the indulgences remit the punishment due to sin in the sight of God, or only that which was enjoined by the Church in her penitential canons?

Pastor—Both the one and the other. Christ made no exceptions when he said to St. Peter: "I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. . . . Whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, shall also be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 19); nor when he spoke to all of the apostles, saying: "Verily I say to you, whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 18). From these words it is evident that Christ gave to his Church full power to unlock the gates of heaven, and to loose every bond that hinders us from entering into his kingdom. Now, the temporal punishments due to sin are an impediment temporarily hindering our entry into heaven. How, then, can any one deny to the Church the power of remitting the temporal punishments, since she has the power to remove the much greater obstacle—namely, sin itself?

Thomas—What is to be understood by the terms "plenary" and "partial" indulgence?

Pastor—A *plenary* indulgence is one by which *all* temporal punishments are remitted, just as if we had rendered full satisfaction for them. A *partial* indulgence is one by which only a part of the debt of punishment is remitted. For instance, an indulgence of seven years, or forty days, means the remission, before God, of so much of the temporal punishment as would have been expiated in the early Church by a canonical penance of so many years or days.

Simon—What conditions are necessary to gain an indulgence ?

Pastor—It is requisite, 1) to be in the state of grace—that is, to have already obtained, by the Sacrament of Penance, pardon for the mortal sins, the temporal punishment for which is to be remitted by the indulgence; and 2) the due performance of the good works which are prescribed, such as fasting, alms, prayers, visits to certain churches or shrines, etc.

Simon—Can indulgences also be gained for the souls in purgatory ?

Pastor—Since we can help the souls in purgatory by prayer, fasting, alms, and the holy sacrifice of the Mass, we can also aid them by the application of indulgences. Two things are to be observed in connection with this question—namely, 1) that only those indulgences can be applied to the souls in purgatory that have been declared applicable to them by the Sovereign Pontiff; and 2) that these indulgences can only be applied to the souls of the departed *by way of suffrage*. The souls of the departed are no longer under the jurisdiction of the Church, and cannot, therefore, be absolved by her from the temporal punishment which they have still to endure. But she does not, on that account, waive her right, as a tender mother, to come to the aid of her suffering children. She appears before the tribunal of the Judge, not only as a suppliant, but also as the stewardess of the treasure of the merits of Christ and his saints, and from it offers to him the ransom for the souls in purgatory, with full confidence that he will accept her offer and release her children from the tortures of the debtor's prison. Indeed, who could for a moment entertain the idea that Christ, the Divine Judge, would decline the offer of his beloved spouse, the Church, or refuse to grant her maternal prayers ?

Thomas—Was it not the proclamation of an indulgence

that occasioned the schism in the Church in the sixteenth century?

Pastor—An indulgence was not so much the occasion as rather the pretext of the unhappy separation from the Church of so many of her members at that period. Pope Leo X. resolved to bring to completion the grand basilica of St. Peter, which his predecessor, Julius II., had begun. In order to obtain the means necessary for this undertaking, he called upon all the faithful throughout the world for voluntary contributions for this purpose. To animate the faithful to greater liberality, and at the same time to show the gratitude of the Holy See for the assistance given, the Pope issued a bull, proclaiming an indulgence to all those who would contribute some voluntary donation towards the erection of the grand cathedral. The promulgation of the indulgence in Germany was entrusted to the Order of the Preachers, also called Dominicans. However, the benefits of the indulgence were not restricted to those who made an offering in money, but all shared equally in the treasures of the Church who complied with the principal and indispensable condition enjoined by the Pope—namely, *sincere repentance and confession of sins*. If some members of the Dominican Order bestowed too much importance upon the offerings in money, and passed over lightly the other good works, and the worthy reception of the sacraments, required by the conditions of the indulgence, this, surely, cannot be made a just charge against the Church. Moreover, as soon as charges in this respect were brought against the preachers of the indulgence, the latter were at once called to account by the Sovereign Pontiff. And even this circumstance would probably have passed unnoticed, had not some members of the Augustinian Order become jealous of the preferment and distinction thus conferred upon the Dominicans. For Martin Luther, who was an Augustinian monk, did not at first oppose the indulgence itself, but, as he

claimed, the *sale* of indulgences alleged against the Dominicans. In the seventy-first of the ninety theses on indulgences he positively declared : “Whoever denies the truth (or validity) of papal indulgences, let him be accursed.” At the same time he solemnly protests that he does “not wish to say aught in contradiction to the Holy Scriptures, the Fathers of the Church, or the popes.” All he desired was an explanation of indulgences, “of which,” he admitted, “*he knew nothing*.” And, indeed, judging from the contradictions contained in his theses, and the sometimes trivial and burlesque tone of the latter, he stood sadly in need of this desired information. This was the signal for the outbreak of the lamentable schism which still exists, and which had its origin, not in the strife and controversy about indulgences, but in the moral corruption of so many professed Christians of those times, who gladly hailed this controversy as a favorable opportunity of rebelling against the authority of the Church, and of giving themselves up to unbounded license. Surely, no reasonable person can find anything deserving of blame in the whole conduct of the Pope in the matter of this indulgence. Where is the simony charged against him ? Can any one justly deny that a contribution in money towards the erection of a church which was to be the pride and glory of Christendom, was a “good work,” and, as such, proper to be designated as one of the conditions for gaining the indulgence ?

Simon—You used the expression “bull” a moment ago. I have often met the words “Papal bull,” but do not exactly know their meaning.

Pastor—The Latin word *bullā*, from which our word *bull* is derived, originally signified the case containing the seal attached to documents by means of a string ; afterwards this term was applied to the seal, and finally it was used to designate the document itself, as, for instance, the celebrated “golden bull” of the Emperor Charles IV., so called from

the golden case containing the seal. The term bull is now applied to the more solemn ordinances or documents emanating from the Sovereign Pontiff. The seal of a bull is generally a disc of lead, stamped on one side with the effigies of the apostles Peter and Paul, and on the other with the name of the reigning Pope, and attached to the document with strings varying in color according to the subject of the instrument. Bulls are commonly designated from the words with which they commence, as the bull "In cœna Domini," "Unigenitus," "Æterni Patris," etc.

Simon—Is there any difference between a jubilee indulgence and any other plenary indulgence ?

Pastor—In the main there is no difference between a jubilee and any other plenary indulgence ; it is distinguished from the latter only in a few particulars. In the time of a jubilee the confessors receive the faculty of absolving from all sins, even those reserved for the Apostolic See, and of changing vows into other works of piety. A jubilee indulgence was first granted by Pope Boniface VIII. in the year 1300, and, according to his ordinance, it was to be repeated every hundred years. At the urgent request of the people of Rome this period was reduced to fifty years, so that the second jubilee, which would have occurred in the year 1400, was promulgated by Pope Clement VI. for the year 1350. Subsequently the period for a jubilee was fixed at thirty-three years, in memory of the thirty-three years during which the Saviour dwelt upon earth ; and, finally, the period from one jubilee to another was limited to twenty-five years. This is the rule to-day. At first the jubilee indulgence could only be gained in the city of Rome itself, and it was necessary to repair thither in order in person to visit the tombs of the martyrs, this being one of the conditions of the jubilee. Pope Paul II., who was the first to limit the period of a jubilee to twenty-five years, extended it to the whole of Christendom, so that this indulgence can now be

gained everywhere and in every church all over the world. Besides the jubilee regularly recurring every twenty-five years, another is celebrated every time a new pope is elected. Pope Sixtus V. (1585) was the first to grant such an indulgence, with the view of obtaining for himself, through the united prayers of the whole Church, the blessing and assistance of God in his sacred office. The other popes afterwards followed his example.

Simon—Why is this indulgence called jubilee? What is the meaning of the word?

Pastor—You ought to be familiar with this word from other secular celebrations. By this term we are accustomed to designate the centennial, semi-centennial, or quarter-centennial commemoration of some joyous or happy event. The name is derived from the Hebrew word "*yobel*," meaning the blast of a trumpet. Among the ancient Jews the fiftieth year (which was a year of remission, in which bondsmen were restored to liberty, and every one returned to his possessions) was announced by the blast of a trumpet, and hence the name of *jubilee* was given to the year itself. This name is certainly most appropriate to the plenary indulgence now granted every twenty-five years to the faithful of the Church. The liberation of the Jewish bondsmen from servitude is an admirable figure of the liberation of the souls of Christians from the thralldom of sin and the slavery of Satan. And the restoration to the people of Israel of those possessions which had been alienated during the previous fifty years, is beautifully significant of the restoration to the penitent sinner of his right to heaven, his paternal inheritance, which he had alienated and forfeited by sin. The opening of the jubilee in Rome was always attended with great solemnity.

Simon—What is the meaning of the partial indulgences which are said to be attached to medals, rosaries, crucifixes, etc.? You sometimes read: "Whoever wears this medal,

devoutly kisses this crucifix, uses this rosary, etc., shall gain an indulgence of so many years or days."

Pastor—To say the beads, or, by means of a medal which one wears, to call to mind the virtues of the saint whose image is engraven upon it, and in the heart to awaken a desire to imitate those virtues ; or reverently to kiss a crucifix, and meditate upon the sufferings of Christ—all these are good actions. The indulgences are granted for these good actions, and not for the carrying of these articles about one's person. Without prayer, pious thoughts, or heavenly aspirations, all these things will be of no avail to the possessor. I would advise you to accept with great caution the extraordinary indulgences you sometimes find in books and pamphlets. If, for instance, you should read of indulgences of ten thousand years, or even more, simply put this down as fraud and falsehood. The Sovereign Pontiffs, from whom the indulgences emanate, are not so lavish with them ; neither are indulgences granted in so singular a form. So, likewise, is it a fraud and deception, if to certain prayers, amulets, crosses, candles, girdles, etc., which are offered for sale, infallible or miraculous effects are attributed ; for example, security against fire and sword, a happy delivery, safety in shipwreck, or the infallible release of a soul from purgatory. All this foolish superstition is detested and condemned by our rational mother, the Catholic Church.

Thomas—Why is it that all indulgences must emanate from Rome ? Is not every bishop a successor of the apostles, and has not each, therefore, the power to distribute the treasures of the Church in his own diocese ?

Pastor—Formerly it was, indeed, customary for bishops to grant many partial, and sometimes even plenary, indulgences. It was but natural that the bishop should exercise the power of remitting or mitigating the canonical penances in favor of the penitents in his own diocese. Subsequently, however, many bishops went too far in this respect, and

granted too many and too extensive indulgences, by which, in the language of the Fourth Council of Lateran, the authority of the Church was brought into contempt, and sinners led on to presumption and carelessness. Therefore this council, held in the year 1215, during the reign of Pope Innocent III., limited the power of the bishops, or rather the bishops then assembled themselves passed an ordinance restricting the granting of indulgences exclusively to the Sovereign Pontiff, as the supreme head of the Church. The bishops retained the power of granting an indulgence of one year, on the occasion of the consecration of a church, and one of forty days on the anniversary of their consecration; likewise an indulgence of forty days on Holy Thursday to all who devoutly visit the Blessed Sacrament during that day. They also have the right to grant an indulgence of fifty days in places of their jurisdiction.

The Pastor paused for a few moments to afford an opportunity to the assembly to ask any further questions upon the subject under consideration.

Simon then said: There can hardly be anything further to ask about indulgences; but would you not be kind enough to tell us something about the Sacrament of EXTREME UNCTION before we separate for the evening?

Pastor—As the explanation of this sacrament will not consume much time, your wish can be gratified. The priest, having disposed the sick person for the reception of this sacrament, the latter, or some one in his name, recites the “Confiteor,” or general form of confession; then the priest adds the “Misereatur” and “Indulgentiam”—the prayers usually said after the general confession. Extending his hand over the sick person, and making the sign of the cross three times, he says: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, may all power of the devil be extinguished in thee, by the laying on of our hands, and by the invocation of all the holy angels, archangels, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and all

the saints. Amen." Dipping his thumb in the holy oil, he anoints the sick person, in the form of the cross, upon the eyes, ears, nose, mouth, hands, and feet; at each unction he makes use of the following form of prayer: "Through this holy unction, and his most tender mercy, may the Lord pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed by thy sight. Amen." And so of the hearing, and the rest.

Simon—Why is holy oil used in the administration of this sacrament?

Pastor—Because it has so been prescribed by St. James in the fifth chapter, fourteenth verse, of his epistle: "If any man be sick among you, let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." The apostle would scarcely have used this language if Christ had not himself ordained this sacrament to be administered in this manner. But if we ask why Christ ordained the unction with oil, in connection with the sacrament, we can hardly be at a loss for an answer, if we consider the beautiful signification of the oil. Unction with oil is soothing and healing. Therefore the oil beautifully typifies the healing power of divine grace, of which the sick man is to be made participant through the holy sacrament. I have already mentioned that in ancient times the wrestlers anointed their bodies with oil, in order to make their members strong and supple. How admirably, therefore, does this unction express that strength which is to be imparted to the sick man, that in the last death-struggle he may valiantly and victoriously fight against the power of Satan!

Simon—What is the object of the imposition of hands?

Pastor—To bless the sick man, and place him under the special protection of God, so that in the last struggle, which is the most dangerous and most trying he may resist the assaults of the evil spirit.

Simon—Why are the several members of the body anointed with oil ?

Pastor—The Sacrament of Extreme Unction was instituted by Christ, to strengthen the soul, to remit venial sins, remove something of the debt of punishment due to past sins, and, if it be expedient for the good of the soul, to restore the health of the body. The five senses of the body are anointed, because they are the agents and instruments of the soul, and because by them God is chiefly offended.

Simon—Are any other prayers recited in the administration of this sacrament besides those which you have just mentioned ?

Pastor—During the administration of the sacrament it is proper that those present engage in prayer for the sick person. It is the wish of the Church that either the seven penitential psalms or the Litany of the Saints be recited on this occasion, if circumstances permit. When the several unctions have been performed, the priest continues: “Lord have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us, Lord have mercy upon us.” The “Our Father” is then recited in silence. After this he goes on: “Save thy servant, trusting in thee, O my God ! Send him, O Lord ! help from thy sanctuary, and do thou defend him from Sion. Be to him, O Lord ! a tower of strength from the face of the enemy ; let not the enemy have power over him, nor the son of iniquity be able to hurt him. Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto thee. The Lord be with you, and with thy spirit.” Having with this salutation greeted those present, the priest invites them to unite with him in prayer, saying : “Let us pray. O Lord God ! who hast said by thy apostle James, ‘Is any one sick among you, let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him ; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him,’

heal, we beseech thee, O our Redeemer ! by the grace of the Holy Ghost, the maladies of this sick man ; cure his wounds, and forgive him his sins ; drive away from him all pains of mind and body, and mercifully restore unto him perfect health both as to the interior and exterior ; that, being recovered by thy mercy, he may return to his former duties ; who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest one God, for ever and ever. Amen.” “Look down, we beseech thee, O Lord ! on thy servant N., fainting under the infirmity of his body, and refresh a soul which thou hast created ; that he, being improved by thy chastisements, may be saved by thy medicine ; through Christ our Lord. Amen.” “O holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God ! who, by imparting the grace of thy benediction to sick bodies, preservest, according to the multitude of thy mercies, the work of thy hands, favorably attend to the invocation of thy name ; and, delivering thy servant from his illness, and restoring him to health, raise him up by thy right hand, strengthen him by thy virtue, defend him by thy power, and restore him with all desired prosperity to thy holy Church ; through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

Simon—I notice from these prayers that the bodily health is also asked for.

Pastor—Yes, the restoration of the health of the sick man is most urgently implored of God, and I earnestly wish that all here present may draw from this fact a salutary lesson for the future.

Simon—I think I can guess what you mean—namely, that no one should fear to call in the priest to administer Extreme Unction to him.

Pastor—That is it precisely. Extreme Unction is not a sacrament for those already writhing in the agony of death, but it is destined, according to the express words of the apostle, to assuage the sufferings of the sick man, and, if it be for the good of his soul, to restore him to health. The apos-

tle says explicitly : “ The prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him.” The name of *extreme*, or *last*, unction should terrify no one. From it we are by no means to understand that he who has received this sacrament must inevitably die. It is called Extreme Unction to distinguish it from the other unctions performed in baptism and confirmation, and which naturally precede it. Let no one, therefore, refuse to receive this sacrament, nor defer it until it be too late. The sick should not look upon the reception of this means of grace as a sad duty, but they should rather rejoice to have the right to receive it, and should make use of their right in good season. Seek to impress what I have just told you upon the minds of the members of your families, in case of serious sickness. If you propose to them in time, when they still have strength, to provide themselves with the aid of this sacrament, you will not find them averse to it, and the alarming suspicion will never enter their minds that you are concealing from them the dangerous character of their malady, and that by means of this sacrament you are trying to prepare them for inevitable death.

So much for to-day, my dear friends. At our next meeting we shall speak of a sacrament which possibly none of those present may ever receive. Still, owing to the several ceremonies and prayers with which it is administered, it is full of instruction for every Christian, and there will be much of interest to explain concerning it.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

SIMON—Is not the Sacrament of Holy Orders always administered during the Ember-days ?

Pastor—Regularly, yes ; but the bishops may also confer Holy Orders at any other time, if the welfare of the people should require it ; if, for instance, a congregation is without a pastor, and would for a length of time be deprived of spiritual care, unless an extraordinary ordination took place. In the very early Church no particular days were observed ; ordinations were held whenever necessity required. In the Western Church it became customary at an early period to have only one *solemn* ordination in the year—namely, in December. Subsequently the middle of Lent and Holy Saturday were appointed for this purpose.

Simon—Why were the Ember-days especially selected for the conferring of Holy Orders ?

Pastor—These days of penance and mortification must have seemed to the Church specially suited for this holy function, because during those days the faithful have an opportunity, by united prayer and fasting, to implore of God the fulness of his Holy Spirit for those about to be ordained priests or deacons, and to obtain for the Church pastors according to God's own heart. The Church lays much store by the prayers and good works of the faithful, when there is question of conferring Holy Orders. Thus we read in the Acts of the Apostles (xiii. 2, 3) that the Christians of Antioch were fasting and praying when the apostles imposed

hands upon St. Barnabas and St. Paul, and ordained them priests and bishops. It is indeed of great consequence to the whole Church to have pious, zealous, and exemplary priests and ministers. Just consider how much good a virtuous priest—one true to his calling—can accomplish in a congregation or parish ! The salvation of innumerable souls, purchased by the blood of Christ, is often in the hands of a single priest. From his lips young and old expect the words of life, the eternal truths of our holy faith, and a thorough instruction in the duties of Christianity. At his hands the faithful ask the administration of the sacraments, from his zeal and solicitude the sick and dying expect unremitting aid and consolation ; the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the oppressed look up to him as to a common spiritual father ; from him they ask counsel, comfort, help, sympathy, protection, and charitable assistance in their affliction and poverty. The eyes of all are turned towards him ; he is the public pattern of his flock, and after his example are moulded and shaped the morals of the people entrusted to his care. In a word, he is the visible guardian angel of his people ; for he has to think of and feel for their temporal and spiritual welfare. Such a priest, true to his office and his heavenly calling, indeed reflects credit upon the Church, and his blameless walk silences the enemies of the faith ; he is a true man of God. Ought not such a virtuous priest be considered a real treasure—a precious gift—bestowed by the Lord, through special affection, upon his people ? “ Every best gift, every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights ” (James i. 17). If the sincere Christian should have nothing more at heart than the advancement of the honor of God, the welfare of the Church, and the salvation of his brethren by good and virtuous priests, then it is for us a grave and urgent duty to offer to God, during the Ember-days, our prayers and our fasts, to the end that the Holy Ghost may enlighten the bishop, that he may

not err in making the choice of priests and ministers for the Church, that he may select the worthy, and drive from the sanctuary the unworthy. Besides this, we should also pray that the Spirit of God may come down with the plenitude of his gifts upon the newly-ordained priests. In doing this we comply with the instruction of the Saviour, who said to his disciples: "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he send forth laborers into his harvest" (Matt. ix. 38).

Simon—Truly, there can be no more important and no more urgent theme of our prayers to God. We shall, in future, take special care to unite our prayers to this end to those of the whole Church. But now you will be pleased to explain to us the manner in which the priesthood is conferred.

Pastor—Certainly; but we shall have to begin with the lowest of the orders, for there is a series of orders preceding that of the priesthood. This can be conferred only upon those who have already received the inferior orders.

Simon—Are all these orders sacraments?

Pastor—No. In the early Church divine worship, and the welfare of the faithful, gave occasion to various functions which could only be entrusted to reliable persons. Whenever such were chosen, they were appointed to their office with prayer and particular ceremonies. It was but natural to promote to higher ecclesiastical offices, and to the dignity of the priesthood, only such as had satisfactorily discharged the duties previously assigned to them, and who had thus furnished evidence of fidelity to their calling. Although at present these functions or offices have either been abolished or are no longer performed by the clergy, still, out of reverence for ancient usage, the law is still in force that no one be advanced to the priesthood who has not been ordained for the special ecclesiastical functions just referred to. The reason why the ancient orders are retained is because they have a spiritual, emblematical meaning, and re-

mind the future priest of the sublimity of the sacerdotal office, and of the sanctity which should adorn him on entering upon it. But these inferior orders are not sacraments—that is to say, they are not special means of grace instituted by Christ. All of this will become clear to you in the course of my explanations.

Simon—Which is the first or lowest of the orders?

Pastor—The inferior orders are preceded by a ceremony by which those destined for the ministry of the Church are received into the ranks of the clergy; they are then called *clerics*, or such as constitute the inheritance of the Lord among men. He that would enjoy the happiness of being distinguished from the rest of the faithful, and of being numbered among those specially belonging to the Lord, can do so only by excelling the rest in sanctity and perfection. This is emblematically indicated to those about to be admitted to the ranks of the clergy by the ceremony referred to. The bishop cuts off a portion of the hair, to teach them that henceforth they must look upon the goods of this earth with as much indifference as they regard the superfluous hair of the head. On the other hand, they are to take God, to whom in future they are to belong, as their portion and inheritance. Hence they repeat after the bishop the words of the Psalmist: ‘The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup (he is as dear to me as food and drink). Thou wilt restore my inheritance to me (thou wilt give me a better inheritance than the earthly one which for thy sake I have yielded up)’ (Psalm xv. 5).

Simon—Hence it is, no doubt, that the priests wear the *tonsure*,* or the little shaven space on the top of the head?

Pastor—That is it. It is constantly to remind them of the promise made to God at the foot of the altar to renounce the pride and pomp of the world. This shorn crown may,

* In this country the clergy are not required to wear the tonsure.

moreover, remind them of the crown of thorns worn by Jesus Christ, the spiritual head of all the faithful.

Simon—Was the tonsure worn in the early days of Christianity ?

Pastor—It is scarcely probable that the tonsure was worn by the clergy during the times of the persecutions, because by this mark they would have been easily recognized, and would have thus unnecessarily exposed themselves to the danger of falling into the hands of their enemies. It is more likely that, in later times, the monks were the first to shave their heads as a sign of humility and penitential spirit. This custom was afterwards adopted by the secular clergy, but they did not wear so large a tonsure as the monks.—The young cleric is also clothed with the white surplice. This is to remind him of the purity and holiness with which hereafter he is to walk in the sight of God. He is particularly to give heed to the words of the apostle (Ephesians iv. 24) to put on the new man who, according to God, is created in justice and holiness of truth.

Simon—Which of the orders is conferred first ?

Pastor—In the primitive times of the Church, particularly during the persecutions, there was need of reliable men to look after the safety both of the Christian temples and the faithful assembled in them. It was their duty to watch that no enemies might obtain access to the churches, or that Jews or pagans might not intrude upon the Christian assemblies. These men were called *doorkeepers* (*ostiarii*) ; they were ordained by prayer and blessings for their special duties, and were inducted to their office by the delivery to them of the keys of the church. Another of their duties was to go from house to house, to announce the place and hour of divine worship. When afterwards bells were introduced for this purpose, the duty of ringing these was assigned to them. Although these functions are now performed by the sacristans, or sextons, who are not of the clergy, the office of *ostia-*

rius has been retained, and it is the first entrusted to the young clerics. Amidst prayer and exhortation the bishop hands to them the keys of the church, and lets them lock and unlock the doors of the church and ring the bell. At the same time the bishop exhorts them to view their office in a higher, spiritual sense—namely above all, to bar their souls against Satan, and to unlock them to God ; and, both in and out of the church, by their good example to invite and draw the faithful to the house of God.

Simon—How beautiful and significant all this is !

Pastor—The next of the orders is that of the *readers* (lectores). It was their duty formerly during divine service to read the lessons from the Scriptures upon which the bishops or priests were to preach. It also belonged to them to pronounce the benediction over the food and fruits brought to the church by the people to be blessed. As an emblem of their office, the bishop hands them the book containing the lessons. But as the duties of their office have long since been abolished, he admonishes them to discharge these duties in a spiritual manner. Instead of reading from an elevated place (the ambo) before the assembled people, they should rather occupy an eminent position by the practice of virtue, and show to all, by whom they are seen or heard, a model of heavenly life. The contents of that book they are to believe with the heart, and practise them by good deeds, and thus instruct the Christian people more by example than by word.

Simon—How is the third order called ?

Pastor—The order of the *exorcists*. It was quite common, not only in the days of the Saviour, but likewise during the first centuries of Christianity, for men to be under the power of Satan, or, as it is called, to be possessed by the devil. God seems to have permitted this, to show, in a striking manner how by sin man fell under the dominion and power of Satan, and how Christ (and Christianity) came

into the world to destroy and annihilate that power. As Christ, so also his apostles and their successors cast out devils ; in fact, this power was exercised by the Christians generally. Afterwards special men were appointed to free the possessed, in the name of the Church ; and this was the origin of the office of the exorcists, still retained. The ordination to this office takes place by prayer, blessing, and the delivery of the book containing the exorcisms. Here again the bishop unites a symbolical meaning with the conferring of this office. Those ordained are above all to endeavor to drive from their own souls, and from their own bodies, the devil with all his works, that he may find in them nothing that he may call his own. The fourth order is that of the *acolytes*.

Simon—What are the duties of the *acolytes*?

Pastor—It was their office formerly to perform those duties at the altar which now are usually performed by the altar-boys—namely, to light the candles, hold the candles at the singing of the Gospel, carry the thurible or censer, and bring wine and water to the altar. Hence, when they are admitted to this office, a candlestick and the cruets are handed them. During this ceremony they are admonished to let the spiritual light of their virtues shine before men, to glorify their Father who is in heaven, and thus to illumine the Christian congregation more effectually than it is possible to do by the natural, sensible light. And, as they bring to the altar the wine and water destined for the Holy Sacrifice, they should strive, by a life of purity and virtue, to render themselves an agreeable sacrifice in the eyes of God.

The orders which I have thus far explained are called the *minor* or *lesser*, to distinguish them from those that follow, and which are known as the *major orders*.

Simon—Which are the major orders ?

Pastor—The first is that of the *subdeaconship*. Formerly subdeaconship belonged to the minor orders, but was

afterwards elevated to the rank of the major orders. The word deacon signifies a servant or minister; the subdeacon is a minister of inferior grade. It is his duty to take the chalice and paten to the altar. In the primitive Church he was charged with the selection and preparation of the offerings necessary for the Holy Sacrifice and the Communion of the faithful. At present he mingles the water with the wine, after the deacon has put the latter into the chalice; besides this he also chants the Epistle. In addition to these sacred functions at the altar, he is charged with the washing of the corporals and purificators which have come in contact with the Blessed Sacrament. These linens, before they are given to a lay person for proper cleansing, must receive a first washing at the hands of a subdeacon, or, in his absence, of a priest, so that any particle that may adhere to them may not be desecrated. The water, after this washing is done, is poured into what is called the *sacrarium*, whence it flows into the ground. The subdeacon, at his ordination, receives the Epistle book, the chalice and paten, and a pair of filled cruets. At the same time he is clothed with the vestments worn by the subdeacon at Mass—namely, the amice, alb, and tunic or dalmatic. Before conferring this order, however, the bishop exhorts the candidates to consider well the step they are about to take. He tells them that, up to this moment, they are at liberty to quit the ecclesiastical calling, and engage themselves by marriage in the world; but that if they will be ordained subdeacons, which he leaves to their choice, they are thereby tied for ever to the service of God and his Church in the state of perpetual continence. Subdeacons also assume the obligation of daily reciting the divine office, or the canonical hours of the Church.

Thomas—This, then, constitutes the so-called celibacy of the clergy. Did Christ command his ministers to lead a life of perpetual continence?

Pastor—Besides the continency which all must observe

according to their state of life, Christ has counselled those “who can take it”—that is to say, who possess the requisite perfection and spiritual strength—to lead a perfectly chaste life. St. Paul likewise recommends a life of perfect chastity: “I would have you to be without solicitude. He who is unmarried careth for the things of the Lord, how he may please God. But he who is married is solicitous about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided” (1 Cor. vii. 31, 32). For this reason virginity was always highly honored in the Catholic Church, and while we acknowledge the sanctity of matrimony, which the Saviour even elevated to the dignity of a sacrament, a life of perfect chastity was always held in much higher esteem. The words of the Holy Scriptures which I have quoted do not, it is true, make it obligatory upon the priests and ministers of the altar to lead an unmarried life ; still, it must be apparent to every one how eminently proper it is that those who minister to the Most Holy and Most Perfect should be taken from those who lead a more holy and more perfect life. If the Jewish priests were bound to abstain from all intercourse with their wives during those days on which they ministered in the temple, and yet ascended the altar only to offer upon it the smoke of incense and the flesh of oxen, how much more becoming is it that the priests of the New Law should observe continual chastity since they offer daily the sacrifice of the Immaculate Lamb ?

Thomas—But how long has the celibacy of the clergy existed in the Catholic Church, and by whom was it made a law ?

Pastor—Celibacy of the clergy has existed from the very beginning of the Church, and we can find no time when it was not a law. No bishop, priest, or deacon was allowed to marry *after* having received Holy Orders. In the primitive days of the Church, owing to the general scarcity of proper subjects for the holy ministry, married men were admitted to sacred orders, but they were obliged to separate from their wives

after their ordination. But afterwards, when the Church was sufficiently spread and established, and there was no longer any scarcity of vocations, none were admitted to sacred orders from the ranks of the married. The Church forces no one to enter the ranks of her clergy; neither does she say to any one, "thou must not marry." She only says: "I have enough sons who are willing to remain unmarried and to lead a life of continency, and if you are unwilling to assume this obligation, I cannot receive you among my priests."

Thomas—I once read that the priests of the Greek Church, who likewise belong to the Catholic Church, are permitted to marry and live with their wives?

Pastor—The general discipline of the Church was relaxed in their favor, in order to avert from the Church greater damage that was to be apprehended. Still, this concession was only made to those who had espoused their wives before their ordination; after their ordination, or after losing their wives by death, they are not permitted to contract marriage. Bishops are always unmarried.

Thomas—Were not the apostles married?

Pastor—Not all, certainly. Some of them were married *before* they were called to the apostleship, but we do not find that they continued to live with their wives afterwards. That they did not continue with their wives after being called by Christ seems clear from the words of St. Peter (Matt. xix. 27): "Behold, we have forsaken *all* things, and followed thee." Now, that amongst the *all* which they had forsaken their wives were also comprised, we may gather from the answer of Christ to Peter's question, "what reward they should receive in return." The Saviour says: "Every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or *wife*, or children, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting."

Thomas—Still, I remember to have read in the Scripture, but cannot now quote the passage, that a bishop or deacon should be the *husband of one wife*.

Pastor—The passage to which you refer may be found in the First Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy (iii. 2, 12). This injunction of the apostle has always been rigorously exacted by the Church, and faithfully observed by her. Although the Church, in the beginning, admitted to the ranks of the clergy those who had been *once* married, but whose wives had either died or had consented to a separation, she has never admitted any to Holy Orders who had had more than *one* wife—that is, who had been more than *once* married. This is the true meaning of the words of St. Paul which seem to have given you trouble, Thomas. For it cannot surely enter into the head of any sensible person to maintain that by these words St. Paul commanded every bishop or deacon actually to have a wife, for he himself had none. In his Epistle to the Corinthians (i. 7, 8) he declares: “I say to the unmarried, and to the widows, it is good for them if they so continue, *even as I*.”

Simon—I presume the ordination to the *priesthood* follows now.

Pastor—We have first to speak of the promotion to *deaconship*. Those advanced to this order are the successors of the seven deacons chosen by the Church of Jerusalem, and appointed or ordained for their office by the imposition of the hands of the apostles. St. Stephen and St. Philip were of their number. A full account of their institution may be found in the sixth chapter of the Acts, from verse 1 to 7. Their original duty was to distribute the alms among the poor. But even in the days of the apostles other functions were entrusted to them. Stephen preached the Gospel, and Philip instructed and baptized the distinguished Ethiopian. Subsequently their functions were mainly of a spiritual character. To preach, to baptize, and to administer Holy Com-

munion—these are the priestly functions the deacons may perform by virtue of their order.

Simon—In what manner are the deacons ordained?

Pastor—Just as they were in the days of the apostles—namely, by prayer and the imposition of the hands of the bishop. As an emblem of the dignity conferred, the newly-ordained deacon receives the stole and the dalmatic, and finally the book of the Gospels is delivered to him.

Simon—How are the deacons promoted to the dignity of the priesthood?

Pastor—Before answering this question I must supplement some things pertaining to the previous orders. In proportion as the dignity conferred increases, the ceremonies with which it is imparted likewise become more solemn. I have already told you that the subdeacons about to be ordained are called upon by the bishop seriously to weigh the step they are about to take, because, by assuming the office to which they ask to be promoted, they bind themselves for life to the service of the Church, and to the duties connected with the order. If they are resolved and prepared to take upon themselves the responsibilities of the new office, they advance one step forward, as an expression of their firm determination. The bishop then kneels down upon the steps of the altar, and begins the Litany of the Saints, in order, in so important an affair, to secure for himself the aid and intercession of the Church triumphant. All the candidates for Holy Orders prostrate themselves in the middle of the sanctuary, and remain stretched upon the floor throughout the whole of this prayer. Towards the end of the litany the bishop, having put on his mitre and taken his crosier, turns towards the future ministers of the Lord, and prays: “That thou wouldst vouchsafe to bless, sanctify, and consecrate these elect, we beseech thee to hear us.” The litany having been completed, the bishop proceeds to confer the several orders.

Now let me explain to you

THE CEREMONIES OF THE ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD.
—The deacons to be promoted to the order of priest or presbyter are presented to the bishop by the archdeacon with the following request: “Most Reverend Father, our Holy Mother, the Catholic Church, asks that you would ordain the deacons here present to the burden of the priesthood.” Then the bishop puts to him the question: “Do you know whether they are worthy?” To which he replies: “As much as human frailty permits, I know and testify that they are worthy to receive the burden of this office.” As if to express his joy and gratification at this good testimony, the bishop answers: “Thanks be to God.” This testimony is likewise asked at the ordination of subdeacons and deacons.

Simon—Why is this testimony in regard to the candidates asked of the archdeacon?

Pastor—In the primitive Church it was the duty of the archdeacon to watch over the minor clergy of the whole diocese, and he therefore best knew who among them was worthy of promotion. At present the office of archdeacon in this regard is abolished. Now, ordinarily, the heads of the seminaries discharge this duty at the ordinations, because they are best able to bear testimony to the worthiness of their pupils. You must not, however, imagine that it is only at the moment of ordination that the bishop seeks to gain this information; long before this he has obtained all possible security. But to remind the archdeacon of the earnestness and conscientiousness with which this testimony should be given, and to afford him an opportunity of giving it before the assembled people, he is once more questioned, in a solemn manner, immediately before ordination, and before the altar of God. Yes, the bishop is not even content with this; for he turns to all those present, clergy and people, and announces to them that he is about to promote those kneeling before him to higher orders, and that, if any one has

anything to allege against any of the persons to be ordained, he may freely declare it. He then pauses for a short time, to afford an opportunity to those who wish to enter a protest. If no objection is raised, then the bishop proceeds to admonish the candidates for promotion of the duties and functions of the priesthood, and exhorts them to a diligent discharge thereof.

Simon—It is really touching to see what solicitude and solemnity the Church employs in ordaining her ministers.

Pastor—It is wholly in accordance with the injunction of St. Paul, who says that those who are to be promoted to Holy Orders should be blameless, and should have a good testimony from those who are without—that is, from the pagans and infidels. How much more, then, should these candidates be found worthy in the eyes of the faithful! Now let us proceed to the ceremonies employed in the ordination to the priesthood.

The essence of the ordination consists in the imposition of the hands. It was in this manner that the apostles conferred this sacrament. St. Paul, writing to his disciple Timothy (iv. 14), says: “Neglect not the grace which is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy and the imposition of the hands of the priesthood.” Accordingly, the bishop first, and then all the priests present, one after another, lay both their hands on the head of each of the candidates successively. After this, while the priests hold their right hands extended over the persons to be ordained, the bishop invites the former to unite their prayers with him, “that God would pour out over his servants whom he has chosen for the priesthood the fulness of his heavenly gifts, that the office which was imposed upon them through the grace of the Most High might also be administered by them by his divine grace.”

Simon—I presume other ceremonies are likewise employed here to symbolize the sacerdotal dignity?

Pastor—You are right. After the imposition of the

hands, the bishop crosses the stole over the breast of the priest, saying: "Take upon thyself the yoke of the Lord, for his yoke is sweet, and his burden is light." By these words he would indicate that the young priest should now devote himself to the service of the altar, and cheerfully bear the burden of the ministry. He is next vested with the chasuble, or priest's vestment, and reminded that it represents charity; "for God is mighty to increase in thee his charity, and to make perfect thy works." The Holy Ghost is now invoked by the hymn "Veni Creator," of which I have already given you a translation. After the first verse of this hymn has been sung, and while the choir continues the remainder, the bishop proceeds to anoint first the thumb and index-finger of each hand, and then the palms of both hands of the new priest; after which he delivers into his hands the chalice with the wine and water, and the paten with the bread, saying: "Receive the power to offer sacrifice to God and celebrate Mass, as well for the living as for the dead, in the name of the Lord." Then the newly-ordained say Mass with the bishop and receive Holy Communion at his hands.

Simon—Why are the hands of the person ordained anointed with oil?

Pastor—This ceremony has several meanings. In the first place, this unction is an emblem of the internal grace of the Holy Ghost infused by the ordination into the soul of the priest. It expresses, secondly, that the priest is to represent Christ in his holy functions, becoming, as it were, another Christ—for *Christ* signifies "the anointed." This unction, finally, is a symbol of the blessing which is to flow from the hands of the priest upon the people. The reason why the thumb and index-finger are specially anointed is because with these the priest touches the Blessed Sacrament and administers it to the people. Since the chalice, destined to contain the precious blood of the heavenly Lamb, is first anointed with oil by the bishop, how much more becoming is

it that the fingers of the priest—this living vessel—that are to touch and carry the adorable body of the Lord, should first be prepared and consecrated by the solemn ceremony of the unction by the bishop !

Simon—I was once present at an ordination, and noticed that the back part of the chasuble, when it was put on the priest, was folded in half.

Pastor—This was formerly done on account of the ancient shape of the chasuble, which I have described to you. As the newly-ordained priests were forthwith to say Mass with the bishop, it was necessary to loop up this vestment, so that they might have full liberty of their arms and hands. With the present form of the chasuble this is unnecessary ; nevertheless, this ancient custom has been retained, just as the custom of raising the chasuble at the Elevation is still observed, although not strictly necessary. However, the folding of the priest's vestment at the ordination has also a symbolical meaning, and this fact may likewise have contributed to the preservation of this custom. At ordination the priest is invested with a twofold power : first, with power over the true and real body of Christ—namely, of changing, by virtue of the words of consecration, bread and wine into the real flesh and blood of the Lord ; secondly, with power over the mystic body of Christ, or the faithful of the Church—namely, to absolve them from their sins. This first power is conferred upon him by the first imposition of the hands of the bishop and the priests by whom he is surrounded, which ceremony is followed by the delivery of the chalice and paten. The second power, although already imparted in the first imposition of the hands, is nevertheless again expressly and specially conferred by a second imposition of the bishop's hands, which takes place towards the end of the Mass. On this occasion the bishop says : “ Receive the Holy Ghost ; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven ; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.” As a sign that the priest

is now endowed with the fulness of the sacerdotal power, the chasuble, till now folded up, is untied and permitted to hang down.—I must further explain one or two other ceremonies that take place during the Mass celebrated with the bishop by the newly-ordained priests. At the Offertory, all who have received any of the orders advance to the altar, in order to present to the bishop a burning candle. I forgot to mention that during the ordination all carry lighted candles in their hands, to express their love for God, their devotion, their zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of the faithful, and constantly to remind them to preserve these qualities in their hearts. They present these candles to the bishop at the Offertory, partly in imitation of the custom observed by all the faithful in the early Church of presenting their offerings at this part of the Mass, and partly, by this trifling gift, to express their gratitude for the favors granted them by the ordination. As a further token of their gratitude, and also as a sign of their acknowledgment of the authority of the bishop, to whom now, in their capacity as ministers of the sanctuary, they owe special obedience and submission, they kiss the bishop's ring—the emblem of his espousal to the Church.—At the “Agnus Dei” all again go to the bishop, and receive from him the kiss of peace, as was customary in the primitive Church. I have already remarked that at the Communion they receive the Holy Eucharist from the hands of the bishop. After Communion the young priests once more advance to the altar, and, before the bishop, recite the Apostles' Creed, thereby attesting that they belong to the orthodox, holy, Catholic Church, and promising that they will instruct in the tenets of the Catholic faith all who may be entrusted to their care. It is now that the second imposition of the bishop's hands, which I mentioned before, takes place. After solemnly promising always to show reverence and obedience to their bishop, the latter says: “May the peace of the Lord always remain with you,”

and affectionately embraces each, to salute him as his spiritual son in Christ, and co-laborer in the kingdom of God upon earth. He then addresses them as follows: "Beloved sons! diligently consider the office to which you have been promoted, and the burden which has been placed upon your shoulders; let it be your first care to lead a holy and religious life, and to please the Almighty, that you may be made worthy of his grace, which, through his mercy, he may grant you." After this he assigns to each certain prayers, to be said as a thanksgiving for the promotion received. Upon the new priests he enjoins to say three Masses for the same intention, and finally begs them also to remember him in their prayers.

This is the manner in which the conferring of Holy Orders is terminated. And now let us also terminate our conference for this evening.

CHAPTER X.

Of the Consecration of Bishops, and of the Councils of the Church.

AT the opening of the next conference *Simon* presented a question upon which several of the audience had debated before the arrival of the pastor, without, however, being able to come to a settlement. He wished to know whether bishops also receive a special ordination.

Pastor—Certainly; but it is called *consecration*. This likewise consists in the imposition of the hands. After the Saviour had himself chosen and appointed the apostles the first bishops of his Church, the latter, after having been fitted for their sublime office by the descent of the Holy Ghost, selected and elevated Paul and Barnabas, and Timothy, the disciple of Paul, to the episcopal rank by prayer and the imposition of hands (Acts xiii. 3, and 1 Tim. iv. 14). The duties of a bishop are the most sacred and onerous, and therefore he needs the special assistance of God. This is imparted to him by the consecration. “They have been placed by the Holy Ghost to rule the Church of God” (Acts xx. 28). This, too, is indicated by their name, derived from the Greek word *episcopos*, which signifies *overseer*. On account of the heavy responsibilities attached to the episcopal office, their choice has at all times been a matter of the greatest care and circumspection. Frequently the holiest of men have declined to accept the dignity, and sought even by flight to escape it. I shall give you a brief account both of the election and the consecration of a bishop.

* In the primitive Church the bishops were elected by the voice of the congregation—clergy and people combined. The metropolitan—that is, the chief bishop of the country or province to which the vacant see belonged—would assemble the neighboring bishops, and declare and consecrate to the office of bishop the person who had been previously elected by the people. At present the bishops are generally chosen by the chapter or canons of the cathedral. In some of the countries of Europe the government has the right to designate certain persons as agreeable to itself. In other countries, again—as, for instance, in the United States—the archbishop and bishops of the province to which the vacant see belongs come together and agree upon three names, which they send to the Holy Father, who then appoints one of the three. But the ratification of the choice and the appointment proper, always depend on the head of the Church—the Pope.

According to the ancient canons and the general practice of the Church, at least three bishops are required for a consecration—one as consecrator, the other two as assistants. When the bishops, clothed with a cope, and wearing the mitre, have entered the sanctuary and taken the seats specially provided for them, one of the assistant bishops presents the bishop-elect to the consecrating bishop, saying: “Most Reverend Father, our holy Mother, the Catholic Church, asks that you elevate this priest here present to the burdensome office of a bishop.” The consecrator asks: “Have you the apostolic mandate?” Answer: “We have.” “Let it be read,” is the reply of the consecrator. The apostolic commission is then read aloud, after which the elect, on bended knees, takes the prescribed oath, in which he vows obedience, fidelity, and devotion to the Holy Father. Then follows an examination on the several points of doctrine and morals of the Catholic Church, to which the elect gives his assent by saying: “I believe.” This is a

vestige of the ancient custom according to which the consecrating bishop, before the consecration, examined the person elected by the people to the episcopacy.

Simon—The charge of carelessness cannot surely be brought against the Church in this matter.

Pastor—As it is the office and duty of the bishop to preach the true doctrine to the people, and by his own edifying example of virtue and piety to be a pattern for his flock, it is but proper and meet that those entrusted with this office should be subjected to a careful examination. Even the Saviour repeatedly asked Peter: “Dost thou love me?” It was only after this that he gave him the commission, “Feed my sheep.”

Simon—Does the consecration now follow?

Pastor—The consecration of the bishop, like the ordination of the priest, takes place during the Mass. After the confession, said together with the consecrator at the foot of the altar, the bishop-elect is conducted by the assisting bishops to a side chapel or side altar, where he is vested in the episcopal robes. Both the consecrator and the bishop-elect now begin the Mass, each at his own altar, and continue it till the end of the tract after the epistle. This being read, the consecrator seats himself before the altar, and the bishop-elect is again conducted into his presence, and is addressed by the consecrator as follows: “It is the duty of a bishop to judge, to interpret, to consecrate, to ordain, to offer, to baptize, and to confirm.” He next invites all present to unite with him in prayer “that the benignity of the Almighty God, providing for the benefit of the Church, would bestow the abundance of his grace upon this elect. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.” Now the Litany of the Saints is sung, during which the consecrator and the assisting bishops kneel, while the elect lies prostrate at the left hand of the consecrator. By this prayer, as I have remarked elsewhere, the Church militant on earth would unite with

the Church triumphant in heaven, in order, by common supplication, to implore for the newly elect all the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The litany being concluded, the consecrator and assisting bishops rise, and the elect kneels before them. The consecrator now takes the Gospel book and places it, opened, upon the neck and shoulders of the elect. This ceremony is to remind him that henceforward he is to consider himself a chosen vessel, to carry the name of Jesus and his holy teachings before kings and nations. It furthermore reminds him that though, as bishop, he is the head, the spiritual judge, and the lawgiver of his people, he is nevertheless himself subject to a higher law, and that, in administering his office, he must be guided by the teachings of the Gospel. Finally, this custom is to teach him not only to impose the yoke of faith and Christian morals upon his subjects, but that he is himself to bear the yoke of the Lord. For otherwise he would be like unto the Pharisees, who, as Christ said (Matt. xxiii. 4), laid heavy and unsupportable burdens upon men's shoulders, but with a finger of their own they would not move them. Then the consecrator and assisting bishops lay their hands simultaneously upon the head of the elect, saying, "*Receive thou the Holy Ghost.*" In this imposition of the hands consists, properly speaking, the essence of the episcopal consecration; and hence St. Paul, writing to Timothy, whom he had consecrated as bishop of Ephesus, says: "Neglect not the grace which is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the imposition of the hands of the priesthood" (1 Tim. iv. 14). The bishops simply say, "*Receive thou the Holy Ghost,*" without adding to what particular end, as is the case in the ordination to the priesthood, because the bishop is ordained for all ecclesiastical functions; he is, in a measure, the fountain of all blessing and sanctification which is imparted to the faithful. Hence not only one or other gift of the Holy Ghost is given him, but he receives the Holy Ghost, the original source of every grace,

in all plenitude and perfection. It is for this reason that not only the hands but also the head of the new bishop is anointed, and this with chrism. This twofold unction expresses the grace of the Holy Ghost, which is more abundantly imparted to the bishop than to the priest. Only the hands of the newly-ordained priest are anointed. The bishop's head is anointed because he is the head of the inferior clergy. The priests are the aids of the bishop—his hands and instruments, as it were, through which he conveys to the people the grace of God; therefore only the hands of the latter are anointed. Now the consecrator, having blessed the crosier, delivers this emblem of spiritual pastorship to the elect, saying: "Receive the staff of the pastoral office, that in the correction of vice thou mayest temper justice with mercy, holding judgment without wrath, mayest soothe the minds of the hearers by cherishing virtue, and mayest not neglect the strictness of discipline through love for tranquillity." This being done, the bishop-elect next receives the ring, after it has been blest. In placing the ring upon his finger the consecrator says: "Take this ring as a token of fidelity; so that being adorned with inviolate faith, thou mayest, without stain, guard the spouse of God—to wit, his holy Church." Then the consecrator takes the book of Gospels, which during all this time has been held upon the shoulders of the new bishop by one of the clergy, and delivers it closed to him, saying: "Receive the Gospel; go preach to the people committed to thy care; for God is powerful, that he may increase to thee his grace, who liveth and reigneth world without end." This ceremony is to impress upon the bishop that the obligation of preaching the word of God to the people is paramount to every other. "It is not fit," said the first bishops, the apostles, "that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables" (Acts vi. 2). And St. Paul (1 Cor. ix. 16) says: "If I preach the Gospel, it is no glory to me: for a necessity lieth upon me: for woe is unto me if

I preach not the Gospel.” After this the consecrator and the assisting bishops give to him the kiss of peace ; for now, after his consecration, he is regarded by them as a brother. From the most ancient times the bishops, following the example of the apostles, have greeted each other as brethren, and the Sovereign Pontiff, when writing to the bishops, calls them brethren in Christ, while in addressing any document to an emperor or king, he styles them “beloved sons in Christ.” Both the consecrator and the elect now continue the Mass, each at his own altar, up to the Offertory. At this point the consecrating bishop again seats himself before the altar, and the newly consecrated, attended by his assistant bishops, kneels down before him and offers two large lighted tapers, two ornamented loaves, and two small ornamented barrels of wine. The reason of this ceremony I gave to you when I explained the ceremonies of the Offertory at Mass. After this both continue the Mass at the same altar, each having his own missal ; they read and do everything together, but there is only one Host and one chalice for both. The bishop-elect receives Holy Communion at the hands of the consecrator, and that under both forms, because both have together offered the Holy Sacrifice, and as a reminiscence of the ancient custom of giving Communion under both species. At the end of Mass, before the last Gospel, the consecrator places the mitre upon the head of the elect, and the gloves upon his hands. As I have already explained to you the symbolic meaning of these insignia, I may pass them over without further remarks. After this investiture, the consecrator takes the newly-consecrated bishop by the right hand, the senior assistant bishop taking him by the left ; they lead him, if he be in his own church, to his proper chair, or, if he be in a different church, to that seat which the consecrator occupied during the consecration. There the consecrator places the crosier in his left hand. Turning towards the altar, and with uncovered head, the consecrator intones the

Ambrosianic hymn of thanksgiving, "*Te Deum*," which is continued by the choir. During the singing of the "*Te Deum*" the assistant bishops, wearing their mitres, lead the new bishop through the church, and, as he proceeds, he bestows his blessing upon the people, who kneel to receive it. When the hymn is finished, and after a few short prayers by the consecrator, the newly-consecrated bishop ascends the altar, and for the first time imparts the solemn episcopal benediction. Finally, the consecrator having returned to his seat, the bishop just consecrated makes a triple genuflection before the consecrator; and at each genuflection says: "*Ad multos annos*"—"For many years." In thus wishing the consecrator a "long life," he desires to express his gratitude for the episcopal consecration received at his hands. The consecrator and the assistant bishops again give him the kiss of peace, after which the last Gospel is said, and all retire from the sanctuary.

Throughout the whole of this narration no one had interrupted the Pastor; he had taken care to interweave the necessary explanations of the ceremonies as they followed in order. At the conclusion all thanked him heartily for the explanation he had afforded them of the ceremonies attending the consecration of a bishop, which were far more beautiful and sublime, and far more significant, than they had ever imagined.

Finally, *Simon* asked whether the abbots, who likewise wear the mitre and crosier, also received the episcopal consecration.

Pastor—Abbots receive a solemn benediction on their induction to office, but do not cease to belong to the rank of the priesthood. The privilege, granted to some abbots, of wearing the ring, crosier, and mitre is a mark of distinction for special services rendered by their order or some of their monasteries. Besides this distinction, they also have the faculty of conferring minor orders upon their own subjects

and the right to attend and cast a vote in the councils of the Church. Abbesses likewise receive a benediction for their office, and in some monasteries they are permitted to carry a crosier.

Simon—You have repeatedly referred to the councils of the Church, but, I confess, I do not exactly understand what is meant by them.

Pastor—Christ promised his apostles and their successors the aid of the Holy Ghost, who, when he should have ascended into heaven, would teach them all truth, and would take care that the power of hell would not, by error or infidelity, prevail against his Church. If, therefore, a dispute arises upon some point of the Christian faith, it is the business of the bishops, under the common head of the Church—the Pope—to examine the doctrine in dispute, and to declare which is the true teaching of Christ. Moreover, it is the duty of the Pope and bishops to watch over and preserve true Christian morals, and to take care that all abuses which may creep in be abolished. To discuss and decide these questions perfectly, the ordinary means of communication—exchange of letters—may at times be inadequate, owing to the nature of the matter to be decided. In such cases the Pope summons all the bishops of the world to meet in some particular place, in order to deliberate together on the affairs of the Church. These assemblies are presided over by the Pope in person, or by a representative sent for that purpose. Such gatherings of the bishops are called councils of the Church. The Greek word *synod* is also used to designate them.

Simon—Were such assemblies or councils held in the primitive Church?

Pastor—The Acts of the Apostles make mention of three such councils held by the apostles themselves. The first was held in the year of our Lord 34 (in the year after the ascension of Christ into heaven), to deliberate upon and settle a

matter concerning the good of the Church—namely, who was to take the place of Judas, the traitor. They chose Matthias (Acts. i. 15 and fol.) The apostles and the remaining disciples assembled again a second time, to make arrangements for the proper provision for the poor; they appointed the deacons for this purpose, and furnished them the authority necessary for their office (Acts vi. 2 and fol.) The third and most important council of the apostles was held in the year of our Lord 51, in which the question was considered whether the pagans who became converts to Christianity were bound to be circumcised, and held to obey the Mosaic law. This demand had been made by some converts from Judaism. The apostles and the ancients of the Church decided in this council that the converts from paganism were not to be burdened with the yoke of the Mosaic law, but that they should refrain from the pollutions of the idols, from impurity, from things strangled, and from blood (Acts xv. 6).

Simon—At that time it was an easy matter to convene in one place all the bishops of the world; but this could hardly have been possible afterwards, when Christianity had spread all over the world.

Pastor—I must draw your attention to a distinction made between the councils of the Church. There are councils which are to pass upon points of faith, or upon other matters belonging to the welfare of the whole or universal Church. To such councils all the bishops of the world are called, and are, as I said before, presided over by the Pope or his representative. These councils are called *Œcumenical* or *General Councils*. And even if not all the bishops of the world are present at this council, it does not on that account lose the character of a general council, because the universal Church is represented by the great majority of the bishops present. Besides these general councils, there are others, in which only the bishops of one country, or of one province of

a country, or only the clergy of one diocese, come together for the purpose of deliberating for the good of the flocks entrusted to their care, to promote good morals and discipline, to abolish abuses, to regulate matters pertaining to divine worship, etc. These councils are called, according to their character, *National Councils*, *Provincial Councils*, or *Diocesan Synods*.

Simon—Were many councils of the Church held?

Pastor—Such particular councils, as I mentioned a moment ago, have been held without number from the earliest to the latest times. General councils have been naturally less frequent, although there have been not a few of these also. . The first after the times of the apostles was held in the year 325 in Nice, under Pope Sylvester, and served to condemn the heresy of Arius, who denied the divinity of Christ. Others were held in the course of time in Constantinople, Ephesus, Chalcedon, Rome, Vienne, Lyons, Constance, Basel, and Trent. The last general council was held in Rome in the year 1869, under Pope Pius IX. It is not yet terminated, but only suspended.

Simon—Would you not also tell us something about the Pope?

Pastor—Certainly, but not to-night; at our next meeting.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the Pope.

SIMON—Does the Pope receive a special consecration?

Pastor—No ; if not already a bishop, he is consecrated like any other bishop, and in his character of Bishop of Rome he is the successor of St. Peter, and the supreme head of the whole Church. He is the spiritual father of all the faithful. It is for this reason we call him “Holy Father,” or “Most Holy Father.” The word *Pope*, derived from the Latin word *Papa*, signifies *Father*.

Thomas—But why call him Most *Holy* Father? This seems to me, to say the least, an exaggeration.

Pastor—St. Paul, writing to the several congregations or churches founded by him, calls them “saints.” Now, every Christian is sanctified by the reception of the sacraments, and it is his calling to work out his sanctification. This name or word is to remind us, both of the sanctity which has been imparted to us, and of that sanctity which we are to acquire by our own co-operation. If it be not reprehensible in baptism to give to a child the name of “John,” meaning “grace of God,” or “Catharine,” the “pure,” to remind it always to correspond to the name by which it is called, then it cannot be reprehensible to call the Christians in general “saints,” to remind them of their sublime vocation. And if no fault can be found with this, it cannot, certainly, be a matter for just criticism if we call the Pope “Most Holy Father ;” for as representative or vicar of Christ, he holds the highest rank among Christians, and the

name "Most Holy Father" reminds him that, as the supreme head of the "saints," he should strive also to acquire the highest degree of sanctity. The Pope calls himself "servant of servants," after the example of Gregory the Great, to show that, despite his exalted position, he is not unmindful of the humility becoming him.

Thomas—Is it really true that at times there were bad and scandalous Popes?

Pastor—It is really true that among the apostles there was one bad man—Judas. But were the other apostles, despite this fact, not holy and righteous men? There were, alas! among the Popes, as well as among the apostles, men who did not correspond to their high and holy office; but happily their number is relatively no greater than the number of bad men among the apostles! Moreover, they were only those who, by outside and improper influence of worldly princes and potentates, were thrust into the papal office. Nevertheless, it is always to be regretted that ever any unworthy men should have occupied the chair of St. Peter, and for that reason we must the more acknowledge the hand of God in the government of his Church, who safely guided her through the storms at times raised by her own pastors, preserved the faith, and did not permit that the gates of hell should prevail against the kingdom of God upon earth. Their number, however, is far less than the enemies of the Church would have the world believe; but the greater we admit their number to have been, the firmer must become our conviction that the Church is built upon a rock. The events of ages gone by show us what we may expect in the ages to come. In the midst of convulsions and ruin, amidst the wreck and renovation of human institutions, this rock, placed by the Eternal hand, shall continue as the foundation of the Christian edifice.

Simon—On the death of a Pope, who appoints his successor?

Pastor—The cardinals. On the day following the solemn obsequies of the Pope, which take place on the ninth day, the cardinals assemble in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican palace, where the Mass of the Holy Ghost is said (to invoke his divine light) by the cardinal dean. After this they repair in solemn procession to that part of the palace where the election is to be held. To each of the cardinals is assigned a cell, simple in construction and plainly furnished. Each is permitted two attendants, who are, however, bound to secrecy. Pending the election, the cardinals are absolutely cut off from all communication with the outer world. The only door leading to that part of the Vatican where they are assembled is securely locked and barred. From this fact this assembly of the cardinals for the election of a Pope is called *Conclave* (a locking-up). They are locked up to guard them against any undue influence from without in their choice. The mode of election is by secret ballot. Two ballotings take place daily, until a choice is made, and a two-thirds vote of all present is necessary for a valid election. If any of the cardinals are detained in their cells on account of sickness, their votes are taken with every possible precaution and formality. As soon as a two-thirds vote is obtained, the fact is announced. The elect is then called upon to declare his acceptance, and to give the name by which in future he is to be known, and then he receives the homage of all present. One of the cardinals now proceeds to a balcony in the Vatican, and proclaims the name of the new Pope.

Simon—What is the object of changing the name?

Pastor—It is said that on the election of a certain Pope, whose baptismal name was Peter, and who, therefore, would have been called Peter II., out of reverence for the Prince of Apostles, changed his name, so that the name of Peter might stand alone in the list of Sovereign Pontiffs. From this circumstance sprang the custom of changing the name of the newly-elected Popes. This custom, moreover, serves to

remind the newly-chosen that henceforth he should sever all family ties, and wholly devote himself to the welfare of the Church of God. So, in like manner, those who enter a religious order receive a new name, to indicate to them that now they have wholly died to the world, even as to their name.

Simon—Is there no other ceremony connected with the election of the Pope? Is he not also installed in his office?

Pastor—Yes, the *Coronation of the Pope*. This takes place on a day soon after the election. After having put on the papal vestments, the Pope is carried in solemn procession through St. Peter's Church. While these marks of homage are shown to the new Pontiff, a master of ceremonies walks at the head of the procession, bearing in one hand a burning candle, and in the other a mace, ending in a small wire basket filled with a light tuft of tow. This tow is set on fire by the master of ceremonies in presence of the Pope, while saying: "*Sic transit gloria mundi*"—"Thus passeth away the glory of the world."

Simon—This is done, no doubt, to remind the new Pontiff not to let the honors, shown to him by the pomp of this celebration, tempt him to pride and vain-glory?

Pastor—Precisely. After this follows the High Mass, celebrated by the Pope, attended with all possible solemnity. This being over, the Pope, is born to the *loggia*, or balcony, over the main entrance of St. Peter's, whence the Popes usually give the solemn blessing to the people. Here the *tiara*, or triple crown, is placed upon his head by one of the cardinals, saying: "Receive this triple-crowned ornament of the head, and know that thou art a father of kings and princes, a ruler of the world, and the vicar of our Saviour Jesus Christ upon earth." With the *tiara* upon his head the Pope now imparts the benediction *urbi et orbi*, and then the usual jubilee indulgence is proclaimed. After the coronation the Pope goes in state to the Church of St. John of

Lateran, to take possession of this patriarchal basilica—his cathedral—the first in dignity in the Christian world. On his entry into this church, he receives, from the hands of one of the cardinals, the keys emblematic of his office ; one of the keys is of gold, and the other of silver. This terminates the grand ceremony by which the newly-chosen supreme head of the Church is introduced into office.

Simon—How many Popes have we had up to the present day ?

Pastor—The actually reigning Pontiff, whose family name is Della Chiesa, but whose papal name is Benedict XV., is the 262nd in succession from St. Peter.

Thomas—Doubtless many of the ceremonies attending the election and coronation of the new Pope are very beautiful and proper ; but the custom of kissing the Pope's foot, by which homage is done to him, is certainly exaggerated, and, I might say, degrading. There are many who are scandalized by this custom.

Pastor—This was the mode by which, at the origin of Christianity, and for centuries before, men, especially in the East, were accustomed to manifest their reverence for, and submission to, supreme authority or sanctity ; and, receiving it in the beginning from the world, the Church has preserved it, as she preserves many other ancient rites, unchanged, but now restricts it to the Holy Father. As to the offence which you say many take at this custom, let me ask were not the Scribes and Pharisees scandalized when Christ, on his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, permitted the people to strew their garments before him upon the highway, and allowed them, amid loud cries of hosanna, to accompany him in triumph into the city ? And did not Simon, the Pharisee, take offence at the Son of God for permitting his feet to be kissed by the penitent Magdalene ? And was not Judas scandalized when she poured out the vase of precious ointment upon the Saviour's head ? And yet the Saviour—who

was the Son of God and still the humblest among men—permitted all this. We honor in the Pope—the Vicar of Christ upon earth—not his person, but the dignity conferred upon him by God. The honor we show to him is referred back to Christ, whose representative he is. If we must receive the teachings and precepts coming from the mouth of the Vicar of Christ as if they came from the mouth of Christ himself, and if we regard the blessings imparted by his hands as if they were imparted by the hands of Christ, why should we not also honor his feet as a symbol of the feet of the Saviour? Moreover, Thomas, if you will recall the account I gave you of the ceremony of the washing of the feet on Holy Thursday, you will there find that the Pope, while he is willing to accept this mark of respect, which seems to annoy you because others declaim against it, is equally disposed to show the same respect not only to those honored with ecclesiastical dignities, but even to the lowest amongst his brethren in the most humble monastery in the Church.

Thomas—In connection with the person of the Pope, there is another point which has occasioned me no little embarrassment—I mean the new dogma of the infallibility of the Pope, declared by the Council of the Vatican. How can infallibility be claimed for the Pope? Does not this give to him a divine attribute? Has he not the same frail, sinful nature that we all possess? There certainly have been Popes who cannot be held up as models of perfection.

Pastor—It is evident, Thomas, that you have not gone to the Catholic Church, but rather to her opponents, to learn what she means by the infallibility of the Pope. I must first call your attention to two most flagrant errors contained in your questions. In the first place, no tolerably well-informed Catholic has ever claimed for the Pope special exemption from sin. The Pope is just as liable to fall, and must employ the same means of grace to preserve him from falling into sin, as the humblest of the faithful. The Pope, like the

lowest in the Church, humbly casts himself at the feet of some simple priest or religious, to confess his sins. The only difference is that he goes to confession more frequently than the majority of the faithful. And every morning, when standing at the foot of the altar, about to offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass, he accuses himself of having “sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed.” In the second place, the dogma of the “Infallibility of the Pope” is no *new* doctrine. The Church, in council assembled, can define no new doctrines. She has but been charged with the commission to guard inviolably the deposit of faith handed down to her by the apostles, and, in case any dispute arises upon any point of doctrine, to explain its true meaning. This has been the action of all the councils of the Church that have ever been held. The bishops of the Church, called together by the Supreme Head to pass judgment upon some disputed question, have only given testimony of that which was always held and believed in the Church from the beginning. For example, when the Fathers of the General Council of Nice, in 325—the first general council after that of the apostles in Jerusalem—declared that Jesus Christ was true God, they did not, surely, proclaim a *new doctrine*, but only declared what had been believed in the Church from the beginning. The dogma of the divinity of Christ was believed, but not formally defined, because it had not been questioned in the Church. But when Arius denied that Jesus Christ was really God, it became necessary to condemn this error, and to set forth the true doctrine in an explicit definition.

Simon—What, then, is the real meaning of the doctrine of papal infallibility?

Pastor—Infallibility of the Pope simply means that when the Pope, as *successor of St. Peter and head of the Church*, officially declares what is the true doctrine revealed by Christ, and held by the Catholic Church, on any point of

faith and morals, he is divinely guarded from *error* by the grace of protection promised by our Lord to St. Peter. Whenever he pronounces any judgment on these points, in his character of universal teacher, his decision is correct and final—that is, no appeal can be had from it to a general council of the Church, but is to be accepted and believed by all the faithful. You will notice that his decision must relate to *faith and morals*, and his infallibility is restricted to his *official* acts as *pastor and teacher of all Christians*, and does not apply to his acts as a *private person*, as *canonist*, *theologian*, *astronomer*, *local bishop*, or *temporal ruler*. In these latter acts he is as much liable to err as any person. Divine assistance, to guide his judgment, is granted to him only in his capacity of *successor of St. Peter*, to whom this assistance was promised by our Divine Lord.

Thomas—Was this preservation from error really promised to St. Peter?

Pastor—It was. This promise is contained explicitly in the words of Christ to Peter (Luke xxii. 31, 32): “Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have *you* (my apostles), that he may sift *you* as wheat; but I have prayed for *thee* (Simon) that *thy* faith fail not; and *thou* being once converted, confirm (or strengthen) thy brethren.” Here our Divine Lord declares that he has prayed, not for all of his apostles, but *only* for *Peter*. And why? Because he is to be the universal shepherd of the flock of Christ, without any exception. For (John xxi. 16, 17) he says to him: “Feed my lambs, feed my sheep.” Now, it is the duty of the true shepherd to lead his flock to good and wholesome pastures, and therefore the Pope, as Christ’s shepherd, must feed his flock with the healthy food of sound doctrine. The prerogative of infallibility is also promised *implicitly* to St. Peter in the words of Christ (Matt. xvi. 18): “And I say unto thee, thou art Peter (the rock), and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail

against it." Christ, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," instituted his Church to transmit to all men, "even to the consummation of the world," the divine truth which alone will lead them to eternal life. Therefore he built his Church upon Peter, the rock, who was to be fortified by, and to rest upon, him, the immovable rock of Eternal Truth, so that the edifice might never be shaken by the winds and storms of error. But if the foundation be unsteady and tottering—if Peter can fall into error—how can the edifice, resting upon it, be expected to stand?

Thomas—But was the infallibility of the Pope generally admitted in the Church before it was made an article of faith by the Vatican Council?

Pastor—The infallibility of the Pope has always been regarded as a truth, divinely revealed, handed down by the constant tradition of the Church, recognized by her councils, both general and particular (their decrees or ordinances never had any binding force until they had received the confirmation of the Pope), and was necessarily presupposed by the acts of the Sovereign Pontiffs in all ages. It has always been implicitly believed and practically acknowledged, for in all the history of the Church no one—priest, bishop, or layman—has ever rejected or refused to receive a definition of doctrines made by the Pope, without being therefor cast out of the Church as a heretic. The definition by the Vatican Council has only formally promulgated the dogma, thereby binding the whole Church to believe the doctrine explicitly.

Thomas—If the doctrine of papal infallibility has always been believed in the Catholic Church, how came it that all the German and American bishops opposed the dogma in the Vatican Council?

Pastor—You are rather unfortunate, to say the least, Thomas, in the choice of your words. It is not true that the German and American bishops opposed the dogma of

infallibility. They opposed only its formal promulgation. They deemed it unnecessary or inopportune to make the definition under existing circumstances. Some of them seriously feared the violence and persecution which menaced the Church if the dogma should be proclaimed. In the solemn session of the council, held on the 18th of July, 1870, over five hundred bishops voted in favor of the promulgation, and two only opposed the doctrine; even those two who voted no immediately declared their adhesion publicly before the world, so that the most absolute unanimity exists upon this point in the teaching body of the Church.

Thomas—Did not the doctrine of papal supremacy and infallibility meet with positive and continued opposition in the Church of France?

Pastor—It did, partially. Up to the time of the Council of Constance we do not find that in France, or in any other part of the Church, there was any dissent on this point. But during the very warm discussion and the general agitation of minds at that period, two French theologians put forth the proposition that the Pope, in matters of faith and morals, was subject to a general council. This proposition seems to imply his fallibility. After the Council of Constance, and the general appeasement of the Church by the election of Martin V., this new opinion sank into oblivion, except, perhaps, so far as refractory princes or bishops might pretend to appeal from the Pope to a future general council. But such appeals were never allowed or countenanced. And, moreover, in point of fact, the questions at issue were, in every instance, questions of administration, and not of faith. Those who made such appeals were cut off from the Church, and could only be reconciled on due submission. King Louis XIV. of France, who was the very embodiment of absolutism, and who set his heart on mortifying and punishing the Pope for refusing to sustain his imperial views of European policy, to that end first made use of what are called

“Gallican liberties.” These were certain privileges and rights which the King of France claimed, in the administration of Church affairs in his kingdom, and which made the Church of France in such administration in some points independent, in a measure, from Rome, and, as the bishops said and felt, so far a slave to the civil government. In his bitter warfare against Rome, Louis XIV. assembled a number of bishops on whom he could count as subject to court influence, and in this assembly the so-called four propositions of Gallicanism were set forth. One of these did declare that the definitions made by a Pope are not irreformable—that is, are not known to be infallible until approved and sanctioned by the acceptance of the Church. These declarations—extracted by the court, and given even by these bishops with great reluctance—Louis XIV. undertook to uphold by his authority. He decreed that they should be taught in every ecclesiastical college and seminary in the kingdom. He expelled the old body of professors who refused to obey, and filled their places with his own creatures, burned the books that controverted this new teaching, and punished their authors by fines and imprisonment. Meanwhile the Popes never ceased to condemn the teaching as directly opposed to the doctrine and administration of the Church; though, from motives of prudence, they did not then condemn it, in the abstract, as heretical. Louis XIV. afterwards repented, and sought in some measure to remedy the evil, and the bishops who weakly yielded in 1682 were all required to retract, and did express their regret. This new doctrine would have died out in France had it not been for the rise of Jansenism. The Jansenists, finding their system again and again condemned by the Popes, and unwilling to yield, were accustomed to maintain that such decisions of the Popes were not infallible, and that they would wait for a future general council before submitting. But the entire subsequent history of the action of the Church towards Jansenism

in France, and during its rise and its decay, affords the fullest practical evidence that the decisions of the Pope *ex cathedra* in matters of faith and morals were held to be binding, final, and, therefore, infallible. This was the actual working, however bookworms or speculative scholars might continue to discuss the question, or even adhere to abstract opinions advocated in the preceding century.

Simon—How came this subject to be taken up by the Vatican Council ?

Pastor—When, in 1867, Pope Pius IX. resolved to convene an œcumenical council of the Church, it was at once believed by some that the question of the infallibility of the Pope would be one of the questions to be brought before the council for decision. Forthwith efforts were made by the opponents of the dogma to prevent a final decision, by agitating the subject in public print, and attacking the doctrine with the weapons borrowed from Gallicanism. By this action they compelled the council to take up and settle the question for all time to come. Had no discussion been raised by them, there would probably have been no action on the subject ; but their own public and persevering declaration of an opinion contrary to the belief of the Church rendered a definition on the subject absolutely necessary.—This, Thomas, is, in short, the history of the opposition to the dogma of the infallibility of the Pope to which you have referred. You see now that it did not in reality arise among the bishops and the clergy of the Church, but was in fact called forth and fomented by the civil governments, to enable them the better to arrogate to themselves greater power, both in state and Church.

Simon—We are all deeply indebted to you for this very clear explanation of a subject so often misrepresented, and therefore frequently misunderstood.

Pastor—Independent of the promise of infallibility expressly made to Peter, and in him to his successors,

this personal privilege necessarily follows from the very object for which the Church has been instituted by Christ. The Church has received from her divine Founder the great commission to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all nations," and he has promised that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned." Faith in Christ through the teachings of the Church, and obedience to her in the fulfilment of her office, are required under pain of eternal damnation. Now, it is repugnant alike to the nature of God and to that of man that God should compel the assent of the reason, and the submission of the will, to a teaching liable to error. Hence the Church must be able, on the one hand, to teach infallibly the whole truth revealed by God, whether written or unwritten; and, on the other hand, she must also be able to discover and condemn, with infallible certainty, all doctrines at variance with the word of God. Now, the question is, how, and through what channel, shall the Church speak? Shall she speak *only* when her bishops are legitimately assembled under the Pope in general council? General councils can be held only at rare intervals. In her whole history of eighteen centuries she numbers only nineteen. Persecutions and other adverse circumstances may frequently render it difficult, if not impossible, to assemble one. Other difficulties may interfere with its sessions, as has frequently been the case, and as the last Vatican Council was by the Franco-German war, and the occupation of the city of Rome by Victor Emmanuel. The teaching authority of the Church, which is for all time, cannot be restricted to general councils, however salutary and influential, and even necessary, these may be from time to time, in the providence of God, in the life of the Church. The Church must speak outside of them, in order to fulfil her mission of proclaiming the truth and condemning error; and she speaks at all times through the voice of her Su-

preme Pontiff, who defines, *ex cathedra*, doctrines of faith and morals, as the circumstances of the Church or the prevalence of error may require.

Simon—How grateful we ought to be to God for having given us an infallible guide to truth in the Church !

Pastor—Let us show our gratitude by always yielding a ready and willing obedience to her. With this resolve we will close our conference for this evening.

CHAPTER XII.

Of the Several Dignitaries of the Church—Of Religious Orders and Confraternities.

PASTOR—This evening the several ecclesiastical dignitaries will engage our attention.

Simon—Who are the cardinals ?

Pastor—The cardinals (their body is known as the College of Cardinals) are the counsellors of the Pope, or the high senate of the Church. They are selected by the Holy Father from amongst those ecclesiastics most distinguished for their learning, piety, and other estimable qualifications. When the Sacred College is complete it numbers seventy members. They are divided into three classes—six cardinal-bishops, fifty cardinal-priests, and fourteen cardinal-deacons. In the class of cardinal-priests there are very frequently archbishops and bishops. The cardinal-deacons may be priests, deacons, or subdeacons, or merely in minor orders. The cardinal-bishops are the ordinaries of what are called the suburban churches of Rome—namely, Ostia, Porto, Albano, Tusculum, Sabina, and Palestrina. The cardinal-priests are the titulars or rectors of the principal parish churches or stations in Rome. They were originally the archpriests who presided over the clergy attached to these churches. The cardinal-deacons sprang from the regionary deacons, of whom there were originally seven, and afterwards fourteen, each one having charge over the poor in a certain district in the city. They derive their titles from some of the ancient churches of the city.

Simon—I have sometimes heard of cardinals *in petto*; who are they?

Pastor—The expression *in petto* means that the Holy Father has declared to the assembly of the Sacred College of Cardinals (this assembly is called *Consistory*) that he has made the appointment of a certain person, but for sufficient reasons has not yet published the name of him promoted. This name is said to be reserved *in petto*—in his mind. For the better despatch of the business that comes before the Sacred College, the members of the college are divided into a number of standing committees; these standing committees are called *congregations*, and the chairman of the committees bears the name of *cardinal-prefect*. Each committee is named after the nature of the business referred to it for examination or regulation—for instance, the Congregation of Sacred Rites, of the Index, of Indulgences and Holy Relics, etc. These congregations or committees meet at stated times, discuss the matters brought before them, and, through the cardinal-prefect or the secretary of the committee, report their decision to the Holy Father for confirmation, modification, or rejection.

Simon—Is there any difference between archbishops and bishops?

Pastor—As regards the sacramental order, there is no distinction between them. The distinction is one of rank only. Each is the chief pastor of the diocese over which he has been placed. Nevertheless, an archbishop has a certain supervision over a number of bishops and dioceses. These dioceses together constitute an *ecclesiastical province*, and the several bishops are called *suffragans* of the archbishop. The archbishop is also known as the *metropolitan*, because in the beginning the archbishop always had his seat or residence in the chief city of a province—in the metropolis or mother-city. Besides this there are other titles likewise based only on precedence of rank and jurisdiction. Thus,

for instance, the archbishop of the principal see of a whole country is called *primate*, and he has a certain jurisdiction and supervision over the metropolitans and their suffragans. Those having jurisdiction over primate, metropolitans, and bishops are called *patriarchs*.

Simon—Are the vestments of the archbishop different from those of the bishop?

Pastor—The distinguishing mark of archiepiscopal rank is the *pallium*. The pallium was originally an outer garment worn by the Greeks, and occasionally by the Romans. It was generally used as a wrap around the shoulders. In the course of time it has undergone the same change as the original stola. Like the latter, it is now only an ornament. It consists of a narrow strip of white wool—resembling the band or border of the ancient pallium—and is worn around the shoulders, and crossed in front. Crosses in black are worked into the wool. The pallium is made at Rome, of the wool shorn from two lambs blessed by the Pope, and annually presented by the nuns of St. Agnes on the feast of their patron saint. The presentation takes place at the *Agnus Dei* during Mass. It is sent by the Pope to every newly-appointed archbishop, as the distinctive badge of archiepiscopal dignity.

Simon—What is a *coadjutor* bishop?

Pastor—Coadjutor bishops are appointed and consecrated to assist (as their title implies) the bishop or ordinary of the diocese in his episcopal functions. The bishop being the head of the diocese, and, as it were, wedded to his church as to a spouse, not more than one bishop can be placed over a diocese. If, from sickness or old age, or the too great extension of the diocese, or any other legitimate reason, the bishop is prevented from discharging the duties of his office, during his lifetime no second bishop can be appointed for this diocese; but some other bishop may be assigned to aid him in his official duties. Such a bishop is then called the

coadjutor bishop. It frequently happens that the coadjutor is appointed *cum jure successionis*—that is, with the right of succession. If the bishop dies, the coadjutor becomes his successor.

Simon—I have sometimes read of a bishop *in partibus infidelium*. What is the meaning of this title?

Pastor—This title originated in connection with coadjutor bishops. Every one elevated to the episcopacy must be the bishop of some certain see or diocese. Now, as the coadjutor cannot be made actual bishop of the diocese in which he is in future to perform episcopal functions, because the rightful bishop is still alive, he is consecrated for a diocese still existing, but where the faithful have been exterminated. There are many such sees in Asia and Africa, once the scene of the most glorious triumphs of Christianity, but now devastated by the horrors of infidelity. Thus, for instance, a priest is consecrated bishop of Capharnaum *in partibus infidelium*—that is, *in infidel regions*; but as he cannot there exercise his jurisdiction, the bishop of Capharnaum is requested to aid some bishop in the West, in giving confirmation, conferring Holy Orders, and performing other duties belonging to the episcopal office. The welfare and interests of the Christian flock require that there be but one shepherd; hence, too, each congregation has but one pastor charged with the administration of the affairs of the parish, whilst other priests are assigned to him as aids and assistants.

Simon—You have so often spoken of dioceses. What constitutes a diocese?

Pastor—The territory contained within certain circumscribed limits, placed under the jurisdiction of a bishop, constitutes a diocese or bishopric.

Simon—I presume the same rule applies to parishes.

Pastor—Precisely. In cities where there are a number of churches, certain districts are marked out, and each district forms a parish.

Thomas—How is it that bishops have permanent residences, while the apostles went about from place to place, without a fixed abode or established congregations ?

Pastor—Your assertion, Thomas, is not quite correct. St. James was the first bishop of Jerusalem, and as such suffered martyrdom. St. John was the first bishop of Ephesus. St. Peter first established the see of Antioch, and then transferred his see to Rome. Besides, if the apostles traveled about to establish new congregations and churches—as, for instance, St. Paul journeyed through the whole of Asia Minor and Greece—they only fulfilled the divine commission given to them to preach the Gospel to all nations ; and the same is done even now by those who, as missionaries, continue the work of conversion commenced by the apostles. However, as soon as they had, through their preaching, anywhere founded a new church, they hastened to give to it a permanent chief pastor. Thus, for instance, Titus was appointed by St. Paul bishop of Crete, in Candia. The several parishes owe their natural origin to the circumstance that, when the number of the faithful in a city became very large, the bishop could no longer unaided provide for their spiritual wants, much less attend to those of the faithful who lived in the outlying towns and villages. Hence they sent out priests, who, as their representatives or vicars, resided in those places, and administered the pastoral office. And when by degrees whole countries were converted to Christianity, many hundreds of priests had to be sent out, so that now, except in missionary countries, there is no congregation or church without a certain and permanent pastor, who, in the name and under the supervision of the chief pastor, the bishop, provides for the spiritual needs of the flock entrusted to him.

Simon—Are all the members of religious orders priests ?

Pastor—Not all. In the earlier days of monastic life, all the monks were pious laymen who lived under the disci-

pline and supervision and pious direction of a common superior. Voluntary poverty and obedience, rigid fasts and works of penance, daily manual labor, prayer and psalm-singing, vigils, reading and meditation of the Scriptures, strict silence, and absolute retirement from the world—these were their objects and occupations, and they lived together in a regulated community, occupied solely with the salvation of their souls. In this respect the monks were but pious Christians who, like the primitive faithful in the days of the apostles, “had all things in common, . . . continuing daily with one accord in the temple.” They attended divine worship with the rest of the faithful, received with them the sacraments, and were exteriorly distinguished in no way from them. Subsequently permission was granted for one or more of their number to become priests, so that these might conduct divine worship for the others in the monasteries. In the course of time they were also allowed to hold religious worship for the people, to administer the Sacrament of Penance, and to some even parochial work was entrusted ; and thus it happened that very many, perhaps most, of the inmates of monasteries or cloisters were admitted to the priesthood.

Thomas—Were there really monks in the early days of Christianity ?

Pastor—Strictly speaking, there were such even before the advent of Christianity. Elias and Eliseus, together with their disciples, lived in seclusion, and were engaged in the contemplation of the divine law. So, likewise, did St. John the Baptist for years lead a most extraordinary heavenly life in the desert, and thus became a perfect model for the Christian recluse. I ought to remark, moreover, that the monks of the early days of Christianity did not dwell together in monasteries or cloisters, but lived in the seclusion and solitude of some forest or desert. Wherever some specially devout hermit, noted for his sanctity, had taken up his abode,

others erected for themselves rude huts or cells in his neighborhood, in order to become his disciples, and place themselves under his guidance and direction. In the midst of their cells they constructed a church for purposes of worship. St. Augustine tells us that at the decline of day these hermits, or solitaries, would assemble around their guide and master, to listen attentively to his pious and learned discourses. Each one of these Fathers of the Desert had at least three thousand under his direction, and sometimes their number was much greater. St. Antony, who dwelt in the desert of Upper Egypt, had five thousand disciples. In the fourth century the number of monks or hermits in Egypt alone numbered seventy-six thousand men and twenty thousand women, distributed in a number of communities or congregations. From Egypt this kind of life, so conformable to the principles of Christianity, quickly spread itself through all parts of the world inhabited by Christians. It was soon introduced into Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia, and into the deserts of Pontus and Cappadocia.—The hermits led a life of extreme austerity; the herbs of the earth were their only food, and water their only drink; rarely were a few figs, dates, or olives added to their repast. Their time was devoted to silent prayer and meditation on the Scriptures, and to some manual labor. They made baskets, mats, and other articles of cane and the leaves of palm. These articles were sold, and the proceeds furnished them with the few things they otherwise needed. Of course this mode of life in the wilderness was possible only in an unpopulated region, and in a climate like that of the East.—In the West, where the monastic life soon found worthy imitators, the monks dwelt together in large houses called monasteries. In these the little room allotted to each monk took the place of the cell in the desert or forest, and hence the rooms of a monastery are called *cells*. And as the hermits gathered around a common guide or father, so each

monastery had its superior or head, who, being the spiritual father of the community, had to watch over and endeavor to promote the spiritual welfare of those entrusted to him. This rule of life is followed in the monasteries even of the present day, but with such modifications as the special objects of the several religious orders require.

Thomas—I must confess that I can by no means reconcile myself to the idea of monastic and religious life. Cannot men serve God, and gain eternal salvation, without going into a monastery or convent?

Pastor—It were sad indeed, both for you and all of us, if the monastery were the only path that leads to heaven. For, you see, none of us live in a convent, and yet we all hope some day to get to heaven. Christ has given commandments which every Christian must observe, and the keeping of which concerns us no less than the religious. Besides these commandments he has also *counselled* many things, without, however, making his *counsel* a *law*. If some, after fulfilling all the commands of God, desire to gain a still higher perfection, and therefore a higher degree of future happiness, let them follow the counsels of Christ. We call them simply *evangelical counsels*: 1) voluntary poverty for the sake of God; 2) perpetual chastity; and 3) obedience, or giving up of one's own will to follow that of God in the person of a superior. The Saviour called those blessed who love and endure poverty for his sake, and he set them an example himself, for "he had not even where to lay his head." He praised those as magnanimous souls who, for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, persevere in virginal continence, and among all his disciples his favorite was he who is called the virgin apostle, St. John. Finally, Christ counsels obedience and denial of self-will, and he himself practised this obedience towards his heavenly Father "unto death, even unto the death of the cross"; and he showed obedience to his foster-father, a poor and humble carpenter. These sublime

teachings could not but make a deep impression upon the Christians, and they eagerly sought to carry them out in practice. This was a philosophy too sublime to have been invented even by the wisest of men, and the best among the pagans could not but admire the Christians for a life regulated according to the evangelical counsels.

Thomas—It is certainly a noble deed to practise such self-denial from high motives. Still, it seems to me that all this can be accomplished without monasteries and cloisters.

Pastor—In this you are perfectly right. And, doubtless, in the very earliest days of Christianity, when religious orders were not yet established or spread, many followed these evangelical counsels, even outside of a monastery. Nevertheless, it is also true that a fixed object is most easily and most surely attained if it is aimed at in union with others, and if no obstacles are thrown in the way from without. Hence it was but natural that several should have combined, in order in common to attain the end which they had proposed to themselves.—And this was the origin of religious orders. And being once established, nothing, again, was more natural than that those who aimed at the same object should unite themselves to the community or order formed to attain that specific object.

Thomas—But it is a great pity that these good people are wholly lost for every other usefulness. As it is, they live but for themselves.

Pastor—Nothing can be further from the truth than your assertion. There is nothing conducive to the spiritual or temporal welfare of mankind to which the various religious orders have not devoted themselves, each in its own way. In the first ages the monks or recluses in the East were a powerful support and defence of the true Christian doctrine against the errors of the Arians. It was particularly for this reason that St. Basil first endeavored to draw them from the solitude of the desert into the neighborhood of the cities, or

to gather them into monasteries in the cities themselves. In the West it was the Order of St. Benedict (founded towards the end of the fourth century), and the orders subsequently modelled after it, that spread or firmly established the Christian religion all over Europe, and transformed its rude and barbarous inhabitants into civilized peoples. Wherever they founded their monasteries the monks cultivated the waste lands, dried up marshes, constructed roads, restrained rivers in their beds, or built bridges over them. How much does not Germany owe to them ! Did they not bring her lands under cultivation, make her agriculture flourish, and change the abode of the savage beast into populous cities ? How much are not Italy, France, Spain, and England indebted to them ! Besides these services rendered to society, the members of the religious orders conferred inestimable benefits upon letters and science. To cultivate and foster not only religious, but also secular knowledge and science, they everywhere established schools in connection with their monasteries, and, by preserving and copying the ancient manuscripts, prepared the materials which were one day to assist in the restoration of human learning. But they were not mere copyists. Many of them advanced far in science, many ages in advance of the times in which they lived. Not content with the laborious task of preserving and putting into order the ancient manuscripts, they rendered the most eminent service to history by compiling chronicles, and thus collected the facts of contemporary history, which, without their labor, would have been lost. — The lowly poverty, the coarse garb, and the austere life of the Order of St. Francis of Assisium admonished men not to give themselves up too eagerly to the pride and pleasures of the world. The smallest portion of the alms which they gathered sufficed for their modest requirements, whilst the major part found its way into the hands of the poor and needy. The wealthy gave cheerfully of their abundance,

and the poor accepted the alms from their hands without blushing on account of the gift. Besides this, they were the zealous and efficient aids of the parochial clergy charged with the care of souls, and as guides and directors in the tribunal of penance they were and still are held in highest esteem.—The Order of St. Dominic, or the Friars Preachers, made it their special object and task to preach the Gospel to infidels and sinners, and their efforts have ever been attended with the greatest success.—The Society of Jesus, or the Jesuits, appeared at a time when the bane of heresy menaced the whole of Christendom. Whilst, on the one hand, they confirmed the faithful, defended the true doctrine, and led back the erring into the bosom of the Church, they devoted themselves, on the other hand, to the sublime calling of carrying the light of the Gospel to the heathen and idolaters. To children they imparted elementary instruction; the youth they trained in letters and the sciences, while as missionaries and confessors they sought to lead all to God by a life of virtue and sanctity. Among the heathen they were physicians, astronomers, agriculturists, architects—in a word, all to all, in order to win all for Christ.—St. Alphonsus, Saint and Doctor of the Church, founded the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, whose members were to become auxiliaries to the pastoral clergy, to labor in the pulpit and the confessional, by retreats and missions, for the conversion of sinners and the salvation of souls. Other orders and congregations were established to nurse and care for the sick in hospitals, and others for the redemption of Christians, groaning in the slavery of the infidel Turks.—The orders of religious women had likewise proposed for themselves, as their chief end, the instruction of youth, the care of the orphan, and the alleviation of human suffering and misery. Surely I have no need of referring to the almost superhuman sacrifices made for suffering humanity by those angelic women, the Sisters of Charity and Mercy, who live

but for their fellow-creatures, who fear not the contagion of the pesthouse, nor dread the deadly missiles of the battle-field, nor shrink from the horrors of the gallows to speak the last word of hope and encouragement to the dying culprit. Their life of virtue and self-forgetfulness extorts the approval and admiration of even the infidel.

Thomas—Yes, if only all orders resembled them ! But how many are there who are solely occupied with prayer and meditation ?

Pastor—Few only are thus occupied exclusively. However, their services are not to be regarded as trivial or insignificant. The whole Church forms but one body, whose head is Christ Jesus. As in the human body every member has its special function, and yet the action of each contributes to the welfare of the whole body, so likewise is it with this mystic, spiritual body.* Not all are prophets, nor all evangelists, says St. Paul ; neither are all capable, in view of their worldly occupations, to devote themselves with the same fervor to prayer and meditation. It is, therefore, most becoming if, from the midst of the body of the faithful, some exclusively devote themselves to this occupation—which, it is to be hoped, no one will class among the indifferent pastimes—and thus appear as constant intercessors of the whole body of Christians. The Israelites once gave battle to their enemies. Moses, their leader, fought not at their head, but knelt upon a neighboring mountain and prayed. When he relaxed in his prayers, the advantage was on the side of the enemy ; and when with fervor he continued his prayers, the victory inclined to the arms of the Israelites. Thus it was not the valor of the Jewish hosts contending in the valley that won the victory, but the prayers of Moses upon the mountain. This is but a figure of what likewise takes place among the hosts of the Christians. Frequently the success of an undertaking is attributable, not to those who work and labor in the cause, but to those who, by their prayers, draw down

God's blessing upon the labors of the others. Only he that has lost all faith in the efficacy of prayer can call this in question. Moreover, those religious, who give themselves up to a contemplative life, work and labor by their example. For the children of this world who, in spite of their baptismal vows, devote all their energies to the world and its pomps, it is truly an earnest and opportune admonition, if here and there, in the midst of their worldly occupations, some religious, with his contempt of the world, crosses their path. Finally, let me remark—and perhaps I ought to have made this observation before—that those who wish to enter a monastery or join a religious community have no less a right to live according to their own choice than others who claim this right for themselves. Many a one leads a life of extravagance and licentiousness in the world, and no one objects ; so many “fast” young men (and even some “advanced” young women) form associations and clubs for the purpose of agreeable pastime—to lead a “jolly” life—which is neither salutary for themselves, nor useful or edifying for others, and still no one dares to throw an obstacle in their way. Are persons who desire in the silence of the cloister to serve God and save their souls alone to be denied this right?

Thomas—What you say is true. Still, I am told there are orders who do not confine themselves to an ordinary religious life, but with the utmost rigor deny themselves every bodily comfort. Although every one is at perfect liberty to enter such a community or not, as he may choose, yet such a mode of life, which I would rather call self-torture, cannot be justified.

Pastor—The most rigorous of all spiritual orders is that of the Trappists ; and the fact that this order is never in want of members, who voluntarily submit to all its austerities, is a proof that there are those who look upon its discipline as something higher than mere self-torture. There are men who have violent temptations to sin to overcome ;

for this purpose the weapons furnished by an ordinary Christian life are insufficient ; it requires a heroic combat, if they would put to flight Satan with his allurements. Others have committed great sins, perhaps great crimes. These are not content with the ordinary penitential works ; for them it is a necessity to subject themselves to exemplary punishment, and if they cannot do this they fall a prey to despair. For such the most rigorous penitential order is the best, to restore to them the lost peace of mind. Others, again, borne down by heavy blows of misfortune, have become so thoroughly disgusted with the world that they cannot quickly enough withdraw from it, to secure themselves against repeated disappointments in the future. An order of the utmost rigor and austerity affords them the coveted security. All such persons are lost to the world ere they have ceased to live in it. In the world they could but protract a painful existence, or would, perhaps, swell the number of suicides, if the portals of some monastery were not, like a peaceful harbor of refuge, open for them, whose rigors and austerities render them far more happy than the most luxurious life in the world could make them !

Thomas—It is my opinion that at least all perpetual or life-long vows should be prohibited in the various orders. How hard it must be, for a whole lifetime hopelessly to regret a step perhaps taken in the ardor of religious enthusiasm or the fervor of unreflecting youth !

Pastor—You seem to take for granted that the entry into the cloister must inevitably be followed by unavailing regret. Who gives you this assurance ? No one is admitted to the profession of vows who has not previously undergone a probation of one or several years' duration, and during this probation greater sacrifices are asked of him, and he is subjected to severer trials, than will ever afterwards fall to his lot. If he could endure all this, and if at the end of this period of probation, during which any sudden enthusiasm must cer-

tainly have subsided, he still feels a desire to bind himself for life, then we may confidently assume that the step is taken with mature and serious reflection, and that he will not be tortured afterwards by remorse on account of it, and that a passing discontentment, which may possibly come upon him, will readily disappear. Does not man, on entering into matrimony, bind himself for life? And here he binds himself in advance to endure all the trials and hardships of matrimonial life, all the cares and anxieties which the maintenance of wife and children shall cause him. It does not depend upon him alone to make his married life a happy one; his best designs may be frustrated by the peculiar character of his partner. And, finally, is it to be the sole prerogative of the world, and of those who are our equals, to ask of us lifelong fidelity? And are we to give up ourselves to God only by halves—to lease ourselves to him, as it were, for a certain limited period, as we would lease a house or farm? All that I have said equally applies to the charge of youthful want of reflection. The Church has herself taken care, by special laws, that perpetual vows are not taken in childhood, or before the years of proper discretion. Or would you have them deferred to that age when the chances of a suitable settlement in the world have passed, or when one has no longer anything to seek in the world, because it has lost its charms? This, surely, would seem more a mockery of God than a sacrifice made for his sake; and those making such vows would, in their own way, resemble sinners who, after a long life passed in the service and pleasures of the world, after a tardy repentance upon their deathbed, think of devoting to God the few hours still remaining to them.

Thomas—Yet those living in a religious community are not alone. I doubt not that each one must put up with the peculiarities of the other, and frequently submit to the wishes and whims of his superiors. Would not all this be

avoided if every one, feeling within himself a higher vocation, were to live and work just as he would in an order, but by himself, alone, without uniting himself with others?

Pastor—The greatest and most important sacrifice which we can and must make to God is the denial of self and the subduing of our own will. But this is scarcely, or, I should rather say, wholly impossible if we withdraw from others and live by ourselves. Each member of an order can be for the others an effectual means for self-denial, and thus an aid to lead them in the way of Christian perfection. This is accomplished incomparably better in a convent than in the world. Moreover, I have already shown how the several religious orders or corporations have different ends in view, each pursuing a different object. Could all this be accomplished as well, if each were to work by himself, as it is now, when many work together to attain a common end? The men of the world understand thoroughly well what truth there is in the maxim, “in union there is strength.” Hence, if some undertaking for the good of a city or country, or for the advancement of commerce or industry, is to prosper, they forthwith organize companies or corporations, divide among themselves the labor and expense, and thus accomplish unitedly what would have been utterly impossible for individuals. That there is strength in union is equally known and understood by the members of religious corporations, and by union they gain the end which singly they could never attain, however great the efforts they might make. But the religious orders are not the only organizations founded in the Catholic Church for specific objects. Besides these the simple faithful have likewise instituted among themselves societies or unions for special purposes. I mean the *Confraternities*.

Thomas—I see that even the religious orders may be considered from different standpoints; and now, after having heard your explanation, I frankly confess that heretofore I

regarded the matter with no little prejudice. It may be the same also with the confraternities; nevertheless, I cannot deny that I have considerable repugnance also to them.

Pastor—Properly speaking, I have already said what may be said in their justification, and I had reason to hope that, after my remarks, you would have appreciated them no less than the religious orders. They are, as I have said, societies or unions formed in order the surer to attain a common object.

Thomas—But are not all Catholics one *confraternity*? Why these particular organizations?

Pastor—Are not all men the children of one common Father, and therefore one *brotherhood*, whose task it is to advance the good of the whole of mankind? Are not the inhabitants of a country one brotherhood, whose concern it should be to labor for the welfare of each individual inhabitant of the whole country? And yet, if some special object is to be attained—if, for instance, a canal is to be opened, a tunnel to be built, or a railroad to be constructed—not all the inhabitants of the country take part in the enterprise, but it is only a certain number, who form a special company in order to realize the project proposed. In like manner, all Catholics are bound to work out their own salvation, and to contribute to the salvation of others. But if some special object is to be obtained—if, for instance, some particular work of piety is to be promoted, some special devotion to be encouraged, etc.,—the accomplishment of such object cannot be made obligatory upon all in general; in fact, all have not the ability or necessary leisure. Only those unite together who take an interest in the proposed work, and who possess the qualifications requisite to accomplish it. Such unions or confraternities may propose to themselves the furthering of some particular devotion—say, the special honor of the Blessed Sacrament, or the Sacred Heart of Jesus, or the veneration of the Blessed Virgin. Or their object may be a

work of Christian charity—for instance, the relief of the poor, as is done by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, or visiting and comforting the sick, or burying the dead. Or, finally, they may aim at their own advancement in Christian perfection by assisting each other by prayer and the frequent reception of the sacraments.

Thomas—Considered in this light, certainly, no fault can be found with such unions or confraternities.

Pastor—Now, my dear friends, let us bring our conference to a close for this evening. The matters which we have discussed will, I doubt not, seem to all of you of sufficient importance to excuse the digression from the subject proper of our conference.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of the Sacrament of Matrimony.

PASTOR—Now let us proceed to the last of the sacraments that still remains for our consideration. The ceremonies attending the reception of this sacrament will not occupy our attention as much as many other matters connected with it. Hence I expect that your questions will mainly refer to these.

Simon—I was indeed about to ask such a question, but I believe I can guess the answer. Why do three proclamations in the Church precede the marriage ceremony?

Pastor—Well, give your own reason for it.

Simon—To afford an opportunity of protesting against the marriage, if any one has a legitimate objection.

Pastor—Not only to afford an opportunity of protest in this case, but also to discover whether there exists any impediment or obstacle to the marriage. Marriage is a sacrament, and, therefore, like the other sacraments, subject to the exclusive authority of the Church. She cannot, it is true, dissolve the bond of a marriage properly contracted, but it belongs to her to determine and regulate the conditions necessary to a valid marriage, and, in cases of doubt, to decide whether this indissoluble bond really exists. In virtue of this authority conferred upon her by her divine Founder, she possesses the right to declare what constitutes an impediment or obstacle to marriage. The right to define and establish such impediments follows from the nature of the sacrament. It is the office of the Church to see to the

proper administration of the sacraments, so that they may attain their end ; it is her duty to guard the sacred trust confided to her, and not to cast the holy to the dogs, or pearls before swine. Hence it is incumbent upon her to see that those who are about to receive the sacrament of matrimony are qualified to do so. This watchfulness the Church has exercised from the beginning by establishing certain impediments to matrimony, not only for the protection of the contracting parties, but also of society itself.

Thomas—Were such impediments really established in the early ages of the Church ?

Pastor—In the year 314 the Council of Neocæsarea, in the second canon, excommunicated any woman who would marry her brother-in-law. Pope Siricius (385–398) declares the vow of virginity an impediment to marriage. Pope Gregory the Great, in 601, forbids marriage in the second degree of consanguinity. In the fourth Lateran Council, in 1215, the proclamation of the intended marriages—a custom which had been introduced in many places—was made a law for the whole Church. This became necessary, because many secretly contracted what were called “clandestine marriages.” As these marriages were entered into secretly, it frequently happened that parties afterwards separated, and entered into new matrimonial engagements. To put a stop to this abuse for the future, the proclamation of marriages was made a universal law by the council just mentioned, and the Council of Trent (1542 and 1564) confirmed the several impediments which had been, from time to time, established, and furthermore ordained that all marriages must be contracted before the pastor of one of the two parties, in the presence of at least two witnesses, otherwise the marriage would be invalid.

Simon—I know a few of the impediments to marriage, but would like to be informed also as to the others.

Pastor—The impediments to marriage are divided into two classes :

- 1) Into such as makes the marriage only *unlawful*, and
- 2) Into such as render the marriage *invalid* or *null*, unless, for weighty reasons, a special permission or *dispensation* is granted by the ecclesiastical authorities.

The first class (*impedimenta impeditia*) includes:

- 1) *The prohibition of the Church* (*Vetitum Ecclesiæ*). The Church prohibits marriages —
 - a) *Within the forbidden time*, which extends from the first Sunday of Advent to the Feast of Christmas; and from Ash Wednesday to Easter.
 - b) *With non-Catholics*.
 - c) *Without previous proclamation* on three successive Sundays or festivals.
- 2) *The simple vow of chastity*, or of not marrying.
- 3) *The promise of marriage* previously given to another person, unless the parties are properly released from the engagement.

Simon—Why are marriages forbidden during Advent and Lent?

Pastor—This prohibition has reference only to *solemn* marriages attended with pomp and display. The reason of this is, because these days are specially devoted to penance and mortification, with which the usual pomp attending weddings and the pleasures of the nuptial feast do not accord.

Simon—Which are the impediments rendering a marriage invalid or null?

Pastor—The impediments which render a marriage *invalid* or *null* are:

- 1) *Mistake in the person*—If, for instance, a man has been married by mistake to a woman whom he did not intend to marry.
- 2) *Force or violence*—If one of the parties has been forced into the marriage unwillingly, by serious and violent threats of harm; or if a woman is deprived of her liberty in order to compel her to consent to the marriage. In these cases there is no free consent given, and therefore no marriage.
- 3) *Disregard of the law of the Church*, requiring the marriage to take place before a duly authorized priest, and in the presence of at least two witnesses.

- 4) *Impotency.*
- 5) Marriages between *Catholics* and *non-baptized persons.*
- 6) The so-called impediment of *public decency* or *propriety.* This impediment arises from an invalid marriage, whether consummated or otherwise, and from public and notorious concubinage. It extends to the second degree of the direct line between the man and blood relations of the woman, and *vice versa.*
- 7) *Solemn vows* made in a religious order, or, which is the same, ordination to the priesthood.
- 8) *An existing marriage*—If one of the parties is already married.
- 9) *Crime*—By crime here is understood:
 - a) *Adultery*, with the mutual promise of marriage after the death of the husband or wife.
 - b) *Mutual conspiracy to murder the husband or wife*, and the actual execution of the plot with a view to marriage on the part of even one of the conspirators.
 - c) *Adultery and murder* of husband or wife, with a view of marrying the adulterous person, even if the latter knew nothing of the murder, and no previous promise of marriage existed.
- 10) *Consanguinity*—This impediment forbids marriage between all related by blood to the third degree inclusive.
- 11) *Affinity*, or relationship by marriage. This impediment extends to the second degree in the collateral line, but in the direct line it invalidates marriage in any degree. Besides natural affinity there is also a
 - a) *Spiritual affinity*—This spiritual relationship invalidates marriage between those who contracted it in Baptism, namely between the person baptized, on the one hand, and the minister and sponsors on the other. There is no spiritual affinity between the sponsors.
 - b) *Legal affinity*—This relationship springs from legal adoption. In this impediment the Church follows the provision of the Civil law. Hence, according to the State law, it will either invalidate or merely prohibit a marriage.

Simon—Why are unions forbidden between those related by blood or marriage ?

Pastor—This prohibition has partly sprung from the solicitude of the Church for the temporal welfare of mankind and the preservation of the vigor of the human race. Experience has shown that many defects and infirmities result from such unions. In 1862 Dr. Blondin * presented to the French Academy a memorial, in which he shows that the offspring of marriages between persons related by blood are very frequently deaf and dumb. In Lyons, 25 per cent. of the deaf-mutes have sprung from such unions ; in Paris, 28 per cent. ; in Bordeaux, 30 per cent. In Berlin, the proportion of deaf mutes is 3.1 to 10,000 Catholics, 6 to 10,000 Protestants, and 27 to 10,000 Jews. According to Dr. Blondin, these unions are also the cause of barrenness and miscarriages. In 1875 Darwin delivered a lecture before the Statistical Society of London, on marriages and their consequences between cousins in England. From the figures he presented it appeared that one-half of the idiots and lunatics in the asylums of England and Scotland spring from these marriages : in England and Wales, 4,308 out of 8,170 ; in Scotland, 541 out of 1,178. Dr. Mitchell, of Edinburgh, attributes idiocy in a great measure to marriages between blood-relations. Dr. Karl Mayer says that “ in Munich, Bavaria, the number of deaf-mutes is 100 per cent. greater among the Protestant population than among Catholics. This, no doubt, is to be attributed to the frequent marriages among relatives.” In the Department du Rhône, in France, a physician observed that of 121 marriages between relatives, 22 were wholly childless, in 17 cases miscarriages had taken place, and in 7 families children were found with enormously enlarged heads, the consequence of dropsy of the brain, while others were afflicted with other evils.

* Rive, “ Christliche Ehe.”

Simon—Can such unions be formed under no circumstances ?

Pastor—If, in certain cases, there exist sufficiently weighty reasons, a special permission or *dispensation* can be obtained for entering into such marriages. For if it belongs to the Church to establish and define the impediments, it is also in her power to dispense from them. For the power that makes the law can also dispense from it.

Thomas—It seems to me there is something very odious connected with these dispensations. If reasons exist to contract such a marriage, notwithstanding the impediment, why is it not left to me and to others to judge of the validity of the reasons, since the granting of the dispensation entirely depends upon the reasons which I have to assign for asking the dispensation ? Or, if the judgment and decision on the validity of the reasons is properly left to the ecclesiastical authorities, why are the dispensations not at least granted *gratis*, or without charge ? Why these annoying fees ? Or are spiritual favors to be bartered for filthy lucre ? That which is possible by means of money should also be possible *without* money ; and, therefore, it ought not to be a great matter for conscientious scruples if one should, even without a dispensation—

Pastor—Stop, stop, Thomas ! Check a little the rapid flow of your language, in which, at best, everything is confusion and misunderstanding. The children of the Catholic Church would do their Mother the greatest favor, if they would punctually and faithfully obey the existing laws, and would not desire to enter into any marriages that require a dispensation. Nevertheless, if such cases do occur, it is evident that the decision upon the gravity of the reasons which would justify or excuse such a step cannot be left to the interested parties themselves ; for if these have once made up their minds to contract such a marriage, surely no reasons will seem to them insufficient. Besides, as the Church,

and not the individual Christians, has passed the law regulating these impediments, it belongs exclusively to her to declare in what instances this law is not to apply. To attend to and despatch the applications for dispensations, made to the Holy See from every quarter of the globe, it is necessary to appoint certain persons who are charged with this business. Now, it is surely but just and equitable that the expenses for the maintenance of these persons, and the other outlays for postage, stationery, etc., connected with this business, should be defrayed by the parties who avail themselves of the maternal indulgence of the Church in their favor, and who occasion these outlays. Persons in moderate circumstances are required to defray but a small proportion of these expenditures; and if they are unwilling to render even this trifling compensation, the Church would, as I have already said, much prefer that they should forego the concession which she would make to them, and simply abide by her existing laws. Moreover, the imposition of this insignificant tax is a means of restricting the too inconsiderate demands for dispensations. And hence the Church acts differently towards those who are possessed of considerable means. These would in no manner be deterred by a trifling outlay from encroaching upon the established order, or be checked in making their demands; and, if the taxes were uniform, they would have a decided advantage over their poorer brethren. If the wealthy ask the Church to show them a favor, it is but fair that they should show their gratitude for the favor received by rendering in return some service to the Church, which may, in a measure, compensate for the deviation from the established order which is allowed for their sake. A suitable means to this end is, if they contribute something towards defraying the expenses occasioned by sending missionaries to foreign countries to spread Christianity. It is, in fact, to this object that the moneys received for dispensations are applied. Now you

see how unjust is the charge that the Church grants dispensations for money, or that she disposes of spiritual goods for the sake of filthy lucre.

Thomas.—In this light, I must confess, the matter has an entirely different aspect. But there is one more question I would like to ask. You said a moment ago that marriages between Catholics and non-Christians were not allowed. From this I conclude that marriages between Christians of different denominations are not prohibited.

Pastor.—Marriages between Catholics and non-Christians are not only forbidden, but positively *invalid and void*. From this it does not, however, by any means follow that marriages between Catholics and those outside of the Church are unobjectionable. The Church has, on the contrary, at all times disapproved of these unions, and for very good reasons. More than thirty councils of the Church, both in ancient and modern times, have expressed themselves adverse to them. In the first place, it generally happens that such unions are attended with great danger to the faith of the Catholic party, or, at least, lead to carelessness and indifference in religion. One of the chief duties of married people is to love each other. Now, the more they endeavor to fulfil this duty, the greater is the probability that each, to please the other, will be inclined carefully to avoid everything by which he may differ or appear singular. Hence the Catholic, to please the other, will be inclined carefully to avoid everything by which he may differ or appear singular. Hence the Catholic will easily persuade himself to disregard the precepts of his Church, and to omit the practices of his religion; or both parties become indifferent to all religion, and then they find, in their mutual indifference and unbelief, indeed a sorry union. If, on the other hand, the Catholic party remains firm in his faith and the practice of his religion, and the non-Catholic likewise holds to his con-

victions, then great danger threatens their domestic peace and happiness. For what can conduce more to harmony between the married couple than the common convictions they share on the sacred matters of religion? And, again, what can more effectually alienate them than opposite convictions concerning this most holy and important subject? Which is the more beautiful and the more gratifying to the married couple, if both visit in common the same church, attend the same worship, together appear at the tribunal of penance, together partake of the Most Holy Eucharist, and by this mysterious union with Christ celebrate a new spiritual union between themselves, or if each goes to another church, attends another worship, and receives other sacraments?

Simon—The first elements of a true union are certainly wanting in a mixed marriage.

Pastor—In the second place, the fears of the Church in regard to mixed marriages apply in a still higher degree to the offspring of such marriages. The preservation and extension of the kingdom of God upon earth is the main object or design of the Church. Therefore she cannot, without being false to her divine calling, do otherwise than desire that the rising generations be reared in the one, true, Catholic religion. And hence she never grants a dispensation for a mixed marriage, unless the promise is given that all the children of such a marriage shall be baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church. But how can the Catholic education of the children prosper in a mixed marriage? Granted that the non-Catholic party will keep the promise he has given, will he be willing effectually to aid the Catholic party in this arduous task? And if he be willing, will he be able? Suppose that the children are brought up in the Catholic religion; how strange it must seem to them, in their tenderest years, and how painful in their maturer years, that the father performs his devotions in one way, and the mother in another; that the father speaks to them in one manner, and the

mother in another, of the mysteries of the Christian religion ; or if the father studiously avoids speaking in their presence of those matters which their mother had taught them to regard as the most important and most sacred ! Still sadder is the lot of such children if the non-Catholic party be indifferent to his own, or all religion ! For is not then the fear well grounded that the religious indifference of the father or mother will exert a most pernicious influence upon the children, and act upon them like a contagion ? And what if both, father *and* mother, have given themselves up to religious indifference—if both pass over in silence the subject of religion, and deprive their offspring of the early knowledge of God and of Christianity which no subsequent instruction can replace, and thus together set them an example of religious indifference ? What is to be expected from the religious education of these children under such circumstances ? Religious education is essentially the work of family example ; the home is the sanctuary where the child is to grow up in piety, and therefore the whole atmosphere in which it moves must be filled with the spirit of religion. What a grand spectacle is presented in this respect by a truly Catholic family—a spectacle which recalls the days of the patriarchs, where the head of the family, in the character of the priest, offered sacrifice to God, and called down the blessing of Heaven upon his dear ones ! When the shades of evening fall upon the earth, and the labors of the day are ended, and night invites to repose, then the whole Christian family assembles for common prayer. Father, mother, sons, and daughters reverently bend the knee before the image of the Crucified and his Blessed Mother. The father recites aloud the prayers, and all present answer in unison ; and, like clouds of incense, their prayers ascend to the throne of God, and fill the whole house with the sweet fragrance of virtue. What are those prayers which they recite ? They praise God, and return him thanks for the favors of the day just ended

they make an act of Catholic faith ; they recommend themselves to the protection of the Blessed Mother, of all the angels and saints of heaven, and intercede for their dear departed who have gone before them in the sign of faith. This is the scene you will meet in a truly Catholic family. But how is it in a mixed family ? If prayers are said there at all, the head of the house does not take part in them. He is not accustomed to bend his knee in prayer, he is not wont to show his reverence to the image of Christ and his saints ; the Catholic faith is to him a folly, the invocation of the Blessed Virgin and the saints he regards as idolatry, and prayers for the dead seem to him useless. In the beautiful choir there is wanting one voice—an important one ; in the harmony there is a dissonance which is never resolved into a harmonious accord.

Simon—It seems to me, the spiritual welfare of the children should alone be sufficient to deter any Catholic from contracting a mixed marriage.

Pastor—Finally, the indissolubility of the marriage-tie is greatly endangered in a union between a Catholic and a non-Catholic. In the Catholic Church the marriage-bond is absolutely indissoluble. The utmost which the Church permits, in cases where a peaceable living together is utterly impossible, is a so-called *separation from bed and board*. In this case, however, neither of the parties can contract a new marriage, because the marriage-bond can only be dissolved by death. Such is not the rule outside of the Church. It is a well-known fact that not one of the many Christian denominations has been able to secure and preserve the indissolubility of the marriage-tie. While the Catholic party to a mixed marriage forms a union which nothing, save death alone, can dissolve, the non-Catholic retains the liberty to shake off the matrimonial yoke whenever it rests too uncomfortably upon his shoulders. The causes furnished him by the civil law for obtaining a divorce are so numerous, and

frequently so trifling, that he must be embarrassed to make a choice. Hence it is certainly pardonable if anxiety fills the breast of the Catholic priest when a mixed couple present themselves before him, and the Catholic party pledges eternal fidelity to the non-Catholic substantially as follows : “I take thee for better, for worse ; I shall remain true to thee, and shall cleave to thee until death, even if thou shouldst make me miserable, if thou shouldst reduce me to beggary, even if thou shouldst become unfaithful to me, or shouldst be guilty of every crime for which the law permits a divorce ; yes, I shall banish from my mind even the mere thought of divorce, as I would the thought of a horrid crime ” ; whilst the other answers in return—not in words, to be sure, but in reality : “I take thee in marriage, but only for so long as my affection, my interests, or other reasons do not prompt me to apply for a divorce and to form a new union.” I do not presume for a moment that the non-Catholic party could be so mean as to permit such a thought to arise in his mind in the solemn hour of marriage. On the contrary, I take for granted that, in the intoxication of love, they sincerely promise each other eternal fidelity ; that they are, indeed, “two souls with but a single thought, two hearts that beat as one ” ; and that the thought of a possible separation is wholly foreign to them. Nevertheless it happens, and, alas ! but too often, that the first charm of love is quickly broken ; the weeks of the honeymoon are soon counted, and in the matrimonial heavens, so bright and promising, light clouds appear here and there, until gradually they gather into a fearful thunder-storm. Suddenly the storm bursts forth in wildest fury, and in one hour all their brightest hopes are blasted. The sequel is an unfortunate, scandalous divorce. Who could have dreamed it from the auspicious beginning ?

Simon—If all who are about to take this hazardous step would only stop to reflect for a moment !

Pastor—Who, therefore, can reasonably blame the Church, if, with true maternal solicitude, she enters her solemn protest against such unions? Is she to bind her children with an indissoluble bond that no power in heaven or on earth, save death alone, can untie, whilst those outside her pale believe themselves to be at liberty to tear asunder the holiest of ties, and to fly from one adulterous union to another? Surely one must have lost all sense of justice, to approve of unions in which one party risks his all, and the other as good as nothing.

Thomas—But mixed marriages cannot be avoided, especially in sections where Catholics are not numerous, and the choice of eligible partners is necessarily limited.

Pastor—This is, alas! but too true. And whilst this circumstance does not remove the dangers to be apprehended from these unions, the Church, like an indulgent mother, is more willing to grant a dispensation when this serious step is taken more from necessity than from choice, cherishing the hope that God will, on this account, throw around such marriages a special safeguard and protection. But, unfortunately, these marriages are not confined to certain localities where Catholics are but few, but they are ever on the increase in the cities, where the paucity of Catholics cannot, certainly, be offered in palliation of them. It is, alas! “wealth,” “social position,” “respectability,” and other similar motives that in the cities prompt these unions. This evil could be greatly lessened, if Catholic parents would but do their duty. Let Catholic parents, who really have at heart the temporal and eternal welfare of their offspring, try to prevent such marriages. When the time arrives for the settlement of their children in the world, let them employ all their authority to obtain obedience to the commands of God and the precepts of the Church. Whenever a suitor for the hand of a daughter presents himself, whenever a son proposes to bring to the house a bride, let them put, as the first

and indispensable condition, the Catholic faith of their fathers, and on this point let them be inexorable. Let them not be moved by the fainting-spells and nervous attacks of their daughters, nor yield to the self-will and stubbornness of their sons. Let them refuse their consent and their blessing, so that at least they may be innocent of the misery and unavailing sorrow of their children when that happens which may reasonably be expected.

Thomas—Why does the Catholic Church positively insist upon the Catholic education of the children of mixed marriages?

Pastor—Because she must insist that all her children do their duty. Now, every Catholic must be convinced of the truth of his faith. If he has not this conviction, he ceases to be a Catholic. But if he has this conviction, he cannot, without grievous sin, permit that his children be deprived of the priceless treasure of the true faith. Parents owe their children more than the preservation of their mere natural life and a secular education. On entering into the state of matrimony, they assume the obligation of taking the place of God with reference to their children; they bind themselves to furnish their souls with everything needful for eternal life, and to bring them up for heaven. Their children are the property of God, who created them; parents have no more right to make to any one concessions prejudicial to the eternal life of their children, than they have a right to take their natural life or in any way shorten it.

Thomas—But what if the non-Catholic were likewise to remain firm in insisting upon the education of the children in his own denomination?

Pastor—In that case no mixed marriages would ever take place—something very much to be desired.

Thomas—But suppose a Catholic were, after all, to agree to have his children brought up in the Protestant faith?

Pastor—In such a case the Catholic would commit a griev-

ous sin, and the Catholic priest could not in conscience assist at the marriage. The marriage, if entered into before a minister or civil justice, would be invalid and void. Hence the Catholic party could not approach the sacraments, unless he admits the wrong he has done, is sorry for it, amends it and is married before the parish priest.

Simon—Then the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist cannot be received before the celebration of a marriage, entered into before a minister or civil justice?

Pastor—No; because the Catholic is about to transgress the laws of the Church that teaches us: “Only those marriages are valid which are contracted before the parish priest.”

Again: “The same laws are binding also on the same Catholics as above, if they contract sponsalia or marriage with non-Catholics.” (Decree “*Ne temere*.”)

Simon—Will you not now tell us something of the prayers said at the nuptial benediction?

Pastor—Ordinarily the priest begins the marriage ceremony by a short address to the bridegroom and bride, in which he calls their attention to the sanctity of the state into which they are about to enter, and to the special duties and responsibilities they are about to assume. He next asks the bridal couple whether it is really their intention to form a matrimonial union. To this question both parties are required to give an affirmative answer in such a manner that the priest and the witnesses may be assured of their intention. The bridal couple now join their right hands, as a symbol of their union; and as a sign that their marriage takes place under the protection and blessing of the Church, the priest places upon their joined hands the stole, and pronounces the words of benediction: “I join you in matrimony, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.” While pronouncing these words the priest makes the sign of the cross over the joined hands of the couple, to express that the grace of this sacrament, like

every other grace, is derived from the crucified Redeemer. He also sprinkles them with holy water, as a symbol of the heavenly blessing which, like dew, is to descend upon them. Next follows the blessing of the wedding-ring, according to this form : “ Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. . O Lord ! hear my prayer, and let my cry come to thee. The Lord be with you, and with thy spirit.” *Let us pray* : “ Bless, O Lord ! this ring which we bless in thy name, that she who shall wear it, keeping inviolable fidelity to her spouse, may ever remain in peace and in thy will, and always live in mutual charity, through Christ our Lord. Amen.” The ring is likewise sprinkled with holy water. The bridegroom now takes the ring, and puts it on the fourth finger of the left hand of the bride, saying : “ With this ring I thee wed, and pledge unto thee my troth,” the priest adding, in making the sign of the cross : “ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.”

Simon—The signification of the ring is sufficiently expressed in the prayer used in its blessing.

Pastor—May all married persons, often in the course of their lives, recall to mind the emblematic language of the nuptial ring, and never break the vow which they made at the foot of the altar, and to which they called God to witness, who is everywhere present, and who will one day be the judge of their fidelity.—After the blessing of the ring the priest says : “ Confirm, O God ! this which thou hast wrought in us, from thy temple, which is in Jerusalem. Lord have mercy on us, Christ have mercy on us, Lord have mercy on us. Our Father, etc. Save thy servants, trusting in thee, O my God ! Send them help, O Lord ! from thy sanctuary, and defend them from Sion. Be to them, O Lord ! a tower of strength against the face of thy enemy. O Lord ! hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto thee. The Lord be with you, and with thy spirit.” *Let us pray* :

“Look down, O Lord ! we beseech thee, upon these thy servants, and afford thy favorable assistance to thy own institutions, by which thou hast ordained the propagation of mankind, that those who are joined together by thy authority may be preserved by thy aid. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

This is the manner in which the marriage ceremony is performed outside of Mass. But it is an ancient Catholic custom to combine the nuptial ceremony with the holy sacrifice of the Mass. And it is, indeed, much to be desired that, to show the importance and dignity of this sacrament, the marriage ceremony might in our days be more frequently united with the Holy Sacrifice. Whenever this is the case, the priest, when the nuptial benediction is terminated, begins the Mass specially appointed for the bridegroom and the bride, which he continues to the end of the “Pater Noster.” Here he turns to the newly-married couple, kneeling on the steps of the altar, and says over them the following prayers: “Mercifully give ear, O Lord ! to our prayers, and let thy grace accompany this thy institution, by which thou hast ordained the propagation of mankind ; that this tie, which is made by thy authority, may be preserved by thy grace ; through our Lord Jesus Christ,” etc. “O God ! who by thy omnipotent hand didst create all things of nothing ; who at the first forming of the world, having made man to the likeness of God, didst out of his flesh make woman, and give her to him for his help, and by this didst inform us that what in its beginning was one ought never to be separated ; O God ! who by so excellent a mystery hast consecrated this union of both sexes, that thou wouldst have it to be a type of that great sacrament which is between Christ and his Church ; O God ! by whom this contract and mutual commerce has been ordained, and privileged with a blessing which alone has not been recalled, either in punishment of original sin or by the sentence of the flood, mercifully look on this thy

servant the bride, who, now given in marriage, earnestly desires to be received under thy protection. May love and peace abound in her ; may she marry in Christ, faithful and chaste ; may she ever imitate the holy women of former times, may she be as acceptable to her husband as Rachel, and as discreet as Rebecca ; may she in her years and fidelity be like Sarah, and may the author of evil at no time have any share in her actions ; may she be steady in faith and the commandments ; may she be true to her engagements and flee all unlawful addresses ; may she fortify her infirmity by thy discipline ; may she be gravely bashful, venerably modest, and well learned in the doctrine of heaven ; may she be fruitful in her offspring ; may she be approved and innocent, and may her happy lot be to arrive at length to the rest of the blessed in the kingdom of heaven ; may they both see their children's children to the third and fourth generation, and live to a happy old age ; through the same Lord Jesus Christ," etc. After this prayer the priest again turns to the altar, and continues the Mass to the Communion. Immediately after the priest's communion, the bridal couple receive the Blessed Sacrament, in order that this sacred food may fill them with divine grace for their future vocation. At the end of the Mass, before the usual blessing of the people, the priest again turns to the bridegroom and bride, and pronounces over them the following blessing :

"The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob be with you ; and may he fulfil his blessing in you, that you may see your children's children to the third and fourth generation ; and afterwards enter into the possession of everlasting life, by the help of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth God for ever and ever. Amen."

Simon—Surely the matrimonial union could not be formed in a more solemn manner, nor the blessings of Heaven be more earnestly implored.

Pastor—I have yet to observe that the nuptial benediction is only given in the first marriage of the bride ; in second marriages it is omitted.

Simon—Why does not the Church allow of this nuptial benediction when the woman has been once married ?

Pastor—Because the second marriage does not so perfectly represent the union of Christ and his Church, which is an eternal tie of *one to one*.

Thus the good Pastor concluded the instructions on the rites and ceremonies employed by the Church in the administration of the sacraments ; but he did not fail to recommend his explanations to the frequent consideration of each one of his hearers. He said he by no means intended merely to satisfy their curiosity by his instructions, but had rather desired thereby to furnish them with an additional incentive to Christian perfection, and a new means for their sanctification. He hoped that they would strive to realize his well-meant object ; for it was only thus that he would feel himself compensated for his pains. All of the numerous assembly cheerfully made this promise amid many marks of their thankfulness. Nor had the pastor the least reason to doubt the fulfilment of their promise ; for it had not escaped his observation that, in consequence of these conferences, they had assisted with greater attention, devotion, and edification at divine worship than formerly, and that they received the sacraments, or witnessed the administration of them, with much greater faith and much greater reverence. And in his instructions and sermons he never drew their attention in vain to the manner in which the various ceremonies afforded valuable lessons in faith and Christian morals. But the more serious and reflecting among his audience were apprehensive of one thing—namely, that in spite of the grateful memory in which the explanations of the pastor would be held by his people, it could not be avoided that in a short

time many of the points he had explained would be forgotten, and among them, perhaps, matters of great importance. This apprehension was shared also by the Pastor ; however, he had already quietly thought of a means by which to prevent the realization of these fears. And great was the joy of the people when he informed them of the expedient he had devised. As he had now held these conferences, he said, he concluded to have them printed as a souvenir of these pleasant hours, that they and their families might afterwards consult them in moments of doubt or perplexity. Moreover, this would have the further advantage that others, at a distance, could, if they desired, inform themselves upon the rites and ceremonies of the Catholic Church during divine worship and at private devotion. He would likewise add the questions they had put, and the objections raised by Thomas, so that others might see how their meetings were conducted ; and, besides, there might be many who thought as Thomas did, and who would be pleased to be enlightened and quieted on many matters. If in reading this book some further questions should suggest themselves, they should not, he begged them, hesitate to submit them to him ; he would gladly give them the desired information. And if, by chance, the book should be reprinted at some future time, he would also add to it their further enquiries.

After having blest all those present, and having recommended them and their families to the holy protection of God, the good Pastor bid them good-night and left the assembly.

ALPHABETICAL INDEX.

- Abbot, 459.
 Abstinence on Fridays and Saturdays, 29.
 Difference between fast and abstinence, 27.
 Acolytes, 421.
 Adoro Te, hymn, 126.
 Advent, Object of, 13.
 Usages peculiar to, 14.
 Whence the name, 13.
 Agnus Dei, 58.
 At Mass, 272.
 Alb, 354.
 All Saints' Day, 259.
 All Souls' Day, 261.
 Alleluia, Frequent use of, during Paschal time, 71.
 Alma Redemptoris, hymn, 154.
 Altar, Consecration of, 225.
 Why placed at east end of church, 223.
 Why stripped on Holy Thursday, 40.
 Altar stone, 226.
 Altar vessels, 343.
 Angels, Feast of, 200.
 Angelical Salutation, 153.
 Angelus bell, 153.
 Anniversary of the dead, 261.
 Apostles, Feasts of, 204.
 Archbishops, 458.
 Ascension, Feast of, 88.
 Ash-Wednesday, 22.
 Ashes, Blessing of, 22.
 Asperges, 72 and 92.
 Ave Maria, hymn, 153.
 Ave Maris Stella, hymn, 149.
 Ave Regina, hymn, 175.
 Banns, Proclamation of, 475.
 Banners, 86.
 Baptism, When conferred in primitive church, 291.
 Ceremonies of, 292.
 Of infants, 302.
 Infants dying without baptism, 301.
 Sponsors in, 299.
 Baptismal vows, 98.
 Baptismal names, why given, 292.
 Baptisteries, 292.
 Beatification, 212.
 Bells, Blessing of, 240.
 Bishop, Consecration of, 433.
 In partibus, 460.
 Coadjutor, 459.
 Suffragan, 458.
 Blessed Sacrament, Benediction of, 324.
 Blessing of churches, 244.
 At end of Mass, 377.
 Breviary, 247.
 Burials, Ceremonies at, 268.

- Candles blessed on feast of the Purification, 19.
 Triple candle, 57.
 Paschal candle, 57.
 Candlemas Day, 19.
 Canon of Mass, 364.
 Canonization of Saints, 210.
 Cardinals, College of, 457.
 Congregation of, 458.
 In petto, 458.
 Catacombs, 274.
 Catafalque, 272.
 Celibacy, 422.
 Cemeteries, Consecration of, 284.
 Why non-Catholics and members of secret societies are excluded from Catholic cemeteries, 281.
 Ceremonies, Object of, 10.
 Chalice, 343.
 Chasuble, 335.
 Chrism, 297.
 Christmas, Why a priest says three Masses on, 15.
 No fast or abstinence on, 16.
 Christmas presents, 16.
 Churches, Ancient, 220.
 Description of ancient, 224.
 In honor of saints, 222.
 Churching of women, 159.
 Cincture, 334.
 Circumcision, Feast of, 127.
 Coadjutor bishop, 459.
 Collation, 27.
 Coliseum, 138.
 Communion, Mode of giving, 310.
 Administered to the Sick, 312.
 Why received fasting, 314.
 Why given under one kind, 318.
 As part of Mass, 370.
 Confession, 388.
 Confessors, 209.
 Confirmation, 303.
 Manner of conferring, 304.
 Why administered only by bishops, 307.
 Confraternities, 472.
 Consecration at Mass, 360.
 Consistory, 458.
 Cope, 338.
 Corpus Christi, Feast of, 109.
 Councils, 440.
 National, 442.
 Provincial, 442.
 (Ecumenical, or General, 441.
 Crosier, 341.
 Cross, Adoration of, 48.
 Why veiled on Passion Sunday, 30.
 Why carried in processions, 86.
 Feast of Finding of the Cross 130.
 Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, 134.
 Way of the, 137.
 Sign of the, 101.
 On spires, 238.
 Dalmatic, 338.
 Deacon, 338.
 Dead, Prayers for the, 263.
 Dies Iræ, hymn, 278.
 Diocese, 460.
 Dispensations, 480.
 Divine Office, 246.
 Easter, 70.
 Easter eggs, 69.
 Easter Communion, 97.
 Ecclesiastical year, 13.
 Province, 458.

Ember days, 95.
 Epiphany, Feast of, 18.
 Evangelists, Emblems of, 204.
 Evangelical counsels, 464.
 Eve of festivals, 89.
 Excommunication, Meaning of,
 284.
 Exorcist, 420.
 Extreme Unction, 410.

Prayers and Ceremonies in the
 administration of, 411.

Fasting, Object of, 23.
 Fast-days, 26.
 Fire Blessing of, 57.
 Friday, Good, 41.
 Consecrated to the memory of
 the Passion, 29.

Gallicanism, 452.
 Good Friday, 41.
 Gospel at Mass, Why said at right
 side of altar, 353.
 Guardian Angels, Feast of, 200.

Holy Water, 90.
 Holy Thursday, 35.
 Holy Saturday, 56.
 Holy Week, 30.

Images, Veneration of, 255.
 Improperia, 50.
 Impediments to matrimony, 476.
 Incense, Use and meaning of, 382.
 Indulgences, 400.
 Meaning of, 401.
 Conditions to gain, 404.
 Of Jubilee, 407.
 On rosaries, medals, etc., 408.
 Infallibility of the Pope, 448.

John the Baptist, Feast of, 203.
 Joseph, Feast of St., 203.
 Jubilee, 407.

Lamp, Sanctuary, 249 and 324.
 Lauda Sion, hymn, 122.
 Litany of the Holy Name, 129.
 Of the Blessed Virgin, 170.
 Of the Saints, 85.

Maniple, 335.
 Martyrs, Acts of the, 206.
 Feast of the, 205.
 Martyrology, 210.
 Mary, Month of, 186.
 Feasts of the Blessed Virgin, 146
 Immaculate Conception, 147
 Nativity, 150.
 Holy Name, 151.
 Presentation, 151.
 Espousals, 152.
 Annunciation, 152.
 Visitation, 155.
 Expectation, 156.
 Purification, 157.
 Seven Dolors, 164.
 Assumption, 167.
 Scapular, 186.
 Ad Nives, 187
 Of the Redemption of Cap
 tives, 188.
 Of the Rosary, 189.
 Mass, whence the name, 325.
 A true sacrifice, 327.
 Precept of hearing, 332.
 Ceremonies of the, 345.
 Parts of the, 345.
 Why said in Latin, 379.
 Prayers of the, 345.
 For the Dead, 265.
 Fruits of the, 267

- Mass, Ceremonies of Solemn Mass, 354.
 Collections at, 359.
 Honorary or offering for, 385.
 Of the Presanctified, 56.
 Matrimony, Sacrament of, 475.
 Impediments to, 476.
 Dispensations, 480.
 Mixed marriages, 482.
 Why forbidden between relatives, 479.
 Maundy Thursday, 37.
 Metropolitan, 458.
 Mitre, 341.

 Name, Holy Name of Jesus, 128.
 Feast of Holy Name, 128.
 Litany of Holy Name, 129.
 Nuptial benediction during Mass, 489.
 Why not given in second marriages, 493.

 Octave, 73.
 Offertory at Mass, 358.
 Oils, Blessing of holy, 39.
 Orders, Holy, 415.
 Minor and major, 418.
 When conferred, 415.
 Orders, Religious, 461.
 Object and usefulness of, 465.
 Rigors, 469.
 Vows, 470.
 Contemplative, 468.
 Organs in churches, 240.

 Pallium, 459.
 Palms, Why blessed, 32.
 Palm Sunday, 31.
 Pange Lingua, hymn, 53 and 124.
 Pantheon, Description of, 260.

 Papal Bull, 406.
 Paschal time, 97.
 Communion, 97.
 Candle, 57.
 Passion Sunday, 30.
 Singing of the, 43.
 Paten, 343.
 Patriarchs, 459.
 Pax at Mass, 373.
 Pectoral Cross, 340.
 Penance, Sacrament of, 387.
 Public, in ancient times, 391.
 Pentecost, 94.
 Peter, Church of St., 221.
 Pilgrimages, 77.
 Pope, Name, 443.
 Election of, 444.
 Coronation, 446.
 Infallibility of, 448.
 Number of popes, 447.
 Post-Communion, 376.
 Prayer, Qualities of, 192.
 Preface at Mass, 363.
 Priesthood, How conferred, 427.
 Primate, 459.
 Processions on Rogation days, 74.
 On Feast of Corpus Christi, 110.
 Purification. Feast of, 19.
 Purple Vestments during Advent and Lent, 14.

 Quadragesima, 21.
 Quartertenses, 95.
 Quinquagesima, 21.

 Regina Cœli, hymn, 168.
 Relics, Veneration of, 226.
 Inclosed in altar, 225.
 Religious orders, 461.
 Requiem Masses, Why said on the 3d, 7th, and 30th day, 265.

- Ring, Episcopal, 341.
 Rogation days, 74.
 Rosary, Origin and explanation of, 189.
 Sacred Heart, Devotion of, 140.
 Feast of, 139.
 Saints, Feasts of the, 200.
 Why instituted, 218.
 Invocation of, 206.
 Canonization of, 210.
 Salvation out of the Catholic Church, 44.
 Salve Regina, hymn, 162.
 Sanctuary Lamp, 249 and 324.
 Satisfaction, 390.
 Saturday, Holy, 56.
 Dedicated to the honor of the Blessed Virgin, 185.
 Scapular of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 186.
 Second marriages, 493.
 Sepulchre, Church of the, 131.
 Septuagesima, 21.
 Sexagesima, 21.
 Spires on churches, 238.
 Sponsors, 299.
 Why non-Catholics not admitted as sponsors, 300.
 Stabat Mater, hymn, 166.
 Stations of the Cross, 137.
 Stole, 335.
 Subdeacon, 339.
 Sunday, 99.
 Synod, Diocesan, 442.
 Tenebræ, Office of, 34.
 Tonsure, 418.
 Transfiguration, Feast of, 144.
 Trinity, Feast of Most Holy, 97.
 Vatican Council, 455.
 Palace, 222.
 Veni Creator, hymn, 308.
 Verbum Supernum Prodiens, hymn, 125.
 Vestments, Sacerdotal, at Mass, 333.
 Different colors, 333.
 Episcopal, 340.
 Vexilla Regis, 54.
 Vidi Aquam, 72.
 Vigil, Meaning of, 88 and 273.
 Virgins, Feasts of Holy, 216.
 Washing of feet on Holy Thursday, 37.
 Washing of priest's hands at Mass, 361.
 Water, Holy, Why at church door, 90.
 Why people are sprinkled with it, 91.
 Water mingled with wine at Mass, 360.
 Water, Baptismal, 59.

10,516

264 B31

Shadler, Rev. F. J.

AUTHOR

The Beauties of the Catholic

TITLE

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION LIBRARY
BERKELEY, CA 94708

Plain Reasons for Being A Catholic

12mo. 203 Pages. Cloth.

Net, \$1.50

Postage, 15 cents extra.

Opinions of the Press

"This simple and easily-understood title is not only perfectly indicative of the book's contents and aim, it is an example of what a book's title should be. Many works, many valuable works, suffer from being 'labeled' with titles chosen, it would appear, rather for their sonority than for their accuracy. The title, simple and sufficient as it is, is also in keeping with the easy unforced, and telling simplicity of the style in which the volume is written—a style which admirably reflects the character and graciousness of the writer who exercises it.

"I have read many works by brilliant writers, the purpose of which is similar to the purpose of Father Power's volume. But I know of none that surpasses his in its power to convince one outside the Fold who asks, sincerely, the question, 'What is the true Faith?' and, asking, seeks an answer."—*Advocate*, Melbourne.

"Father Power is one of our best exponents of the Catholic Faith in popular English. He writes for the man-in-the-street, and his style is eminently simple and direct."—*The Examiner*, Bombay.

"Catholic laymen who want to be well informed of the reason for their faith and to have a ready and sound answer for the intellectual objections brought against the Catholic religion, will find the material at hand in this work. The book is clear, well-written, and covers the ground completely in two hundred pages. It is an excellent book to give to any one who is interested in knowing the Catholic side of the Church."—*The Ave Maria*, Notre Dame.

"The argument throughout is clear, telling and modern in application."—*Franciscan Herald*, Chicago.

"This is a new effort to appeal to reason. Just now, when the Church is receiving so much free advertising, it is good to have a book that does this so well. Father Power's treatment is very fresh and interesting, and the book is eminently readable. The intelligent layman or laywoman, seeking a reason for the faith that is in him or her, will prize this new book."—*The Catholic Sun*, Syracuse.

"For Catholics who are prone to become stupid when asked to give cause for 'The Faith that's in them', this book will be invaluable."—*The Catholic Columbian*.